WHAT WILL YOU GIVE TO YOUR CHILD?

WHAT WILL YOU GIVE TO YOUR CHILD?

As I gaze upon your face, mystery overwhelms me;
You who belong to all have become mine.

SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

WHAT WILL YOU GIVE TO YOUR CHILD?

BY

MRS. ARMEL O'CONNOR.

WITH A FOREWORD BY

REV. H. E. G. ROPE, M.A.

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Children are immensely impressionable to *personality*, not indeed to what those around them say, or even do, but to what they *are* and to whether or not these seniors are simple and sincere, and full of love or no. . . .

BARON FRIEDRICH VON HUGEL.

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"COMRADES," FROM "VILLAGE MEMORIES"

TO NOEL BUXTON, M.P.

THESE papers, written in a different language, and originally dedicated "To Every Mother," have already appeared in serial form in America and Ireland (1914-1917) and were, I was told, much liked by those who had been taught to express themselves in the same terms. But to get them read, much less liked, by my old friends in England, a translation seems to be an absolute necessity. You gave me an opportunity of realizing this at the Conference on Education at Stratford-on-Avon. Before attending that Conference I had vaguely imagined that the gift of tongues might still prevail, and that although my educational ideals were sent forth in a foreign language, they would come home to every parent in the way best suited to his or her own heart. I see I was wrong. One is not in the least encouraged by listening to a lecture that one cannot follow: on the contrary one goes away with a feeling of disappointment and irritation.

Hence this edition to reach a wider public. "It takes some of all sorts to make a world," as an old Welsh huntsman used to say in defence of his uneven pack of hounds. And bearing this in mind I have tried to re-write these suggestions in the way in which I wrote for *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*—just as if I were

talking to my friends in the hunting field—just as if I were talking to your friends at the Conference.

Happiness has been well defined as hopeful effort. The re-clothing of this little book in festive garb has been, on my part, a very hopeful effort. A new spirit is stirring in education.

There is no need to explain why I have asked you to allow me to associate your name with the ideal of all that can be done by good parents for their children.

Yours in Our Lord and St. Francis,

VIOLET O'CONNOR.

MARY'S MEADOW,
LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE.

April 25th, 1922.

FOREWORD

I HAVE been greatly honoured by the writer of this book with a request for a few prefatory words. Its theme is the vocation of motherhood in the training of children. Written by a Catholic mainly for non-Catholics (including even pagans of good will), it boldly proclaims that mothers must approach their task, under pain of defeat, in the spirit of a religious vocation, and advocates that the spirit of St. Francis be taken for guide and pattern in the formation of their children's characters. A very happy notion, it seems to me, is that of an informal 'Fourth Order of St. Francis' to comprise the unattached who in some sort take him for their model. Mrs. O'Connor claims the story-teller's "right to make words mean exactly what I mean," (excluding, of course, the technical words of theology).

This is the living heart of a book which abounds in happy illustrations, hints, and reflections, enforcing, with a rich variety of ways and means, that lesson to the practical fulfilment of which she has devoted herself so long and so wholeheartedly in a spirit of willing sacrifice, the only spirit in which any true "success" can be hoped for. Many of the illustrations are taken, I know, from actual experience, and are made attractive by a wholly delightful humour, as for example the old lady who took to weeding for an occupation, and carefully eliminated the

antirhinums—but no ! I will send the reader to the original. Of the reflections some deserve to be laid up in the treasury of memory for all time, for instance this one: "nothing which is really worth having costs more than is within the means of everybody;" or again "all that you need for the present moment, you have; all that you may need to-morrow, and for the remainder of your life, is ready for you, waiting to come to you, somewhere in God's Cupboard" admirably expressed, wholly true, and entirely Franciscan.

Those who have been privileged, like the present writer, to visit Mary's Meadow, will know that the descriptions are charmingly true, and that Mrs. O'Connor and her gifted husband spare no sacrifice to carry out in practice the teaching their books set forth so persuasively and illustrate so happily. The keynote of their Franciscanism may be given in the well-chosen words of St. Francis's biographer:

> "In their own persons they (the Friars) prove the Catholic principle that the antithesis of spirituality is not humanity but brutality. Man is never more truly human than when he is most spiritual, and never spiritual when he is not human."
>
> (Fr. Cuthbert. "THE FRIARS AND HOW THEY CAME TO ENGLAND" (1903). Introd. p. 109).

Mrs. O'Connor of set purpose casts wide the net of her appeal. To modernists within or without the various non-Catholic religious bodies, she says, in effect: "do not waste precious time in arguing about the Divinity of Christ. Follow His teaching, approach Him and it through His servant Francis," knowing well that "if any man will do the will of Him, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." Not only the non-Catholic, but even the non-Christian of good will can hardly escape the attraction of St. Francis, once they come within its reach, much less

that of St. Francis's Master and ours. In this way, she believes—and who will contradict her?—a way of approach lies open for all those of good will; and her aim is to attract those outside to enter upon that way.

A priest is a strange person, some may think, to be asked to introduce a book upon the vocation of motherhood in the training of chidren. But this would be, after all, a thoughtless objection. The parish priest must know something about that family life which it is part of his vocation to influence, and a book like this seems to me eminently helpful towards that end. Again, a priest, perhaps more than any other man, knows what it is to have a good mother and how beyond all telling is the debt which he owes to his mother, and can make his own those words of Lamartine "*Heureux l'homme à qui Dieu donne une sainte mère.*" Again, have not priests borne in mind all down the centuries, the words of our Divine Lord "suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not. For of such is the Kingdom of God"? (Mark x. 14). A parish priest necessarily sees enough, and more than enough, of the seamy side of our fallen nature, and the weight of his own failings and those of poor struggling humanity in general, at times presses heavily upon him. How gladly does he turn for consolation and encouragement to the thought of the little ones and their happy joyous innocence, the nearest approach to the lost Eden left us! How many clerics have delighted in the presence of children! St. Benedict, St. Francis, St Philip Neri, Don Bosco, and, last but not least, dearest to me of all uncanonised saints, Pius X. of blessed memory. Never while I live can I forget the smile of heavenly gladness that lit up those eyes of ardent charity when groups of children knelt for his blessing in the Cortile San Damaso of the Vatican in 1914, his blessing who had opened to all of them the way of frequent communion.

Ex ore infantium. May this book be blessed with that success which its writer alone covets; may it help to train up little ones in such a way that out of their mouths may be perfected praise.

H. E. G. ROPE.

PLOWDEN,

October 4th, 1922.

A FAIRY GODMOTHER

Till one arose, and from his pack's scant treasure
A hoarded volume drew,
And cards were dropped from hands of listless leisure
To hear the Tale anew.

BRET HARTE.

Things you'd have heard in the Might Have Been,
Things you'd have thought and loved and seen,
I've written them out all fair and clean.

M. NIGHTINGALE.

Enough that now thou wilt not fail
To listen to my fairy-tale.

LEWIS CARROLL.

A FAIRY GODMOTHER

DO you remember how, in the days of your own childhood, there were eleven good fairy godmothers who brought their offerings to the christening of the king's baby daughter; and how, at the last minute, one wicked old creature, who had never been invited, pushed her way in and tried to spoil it all?

Well, I feel certain that they still come, and that the same ceremony is enacted in these days of our own babies, though perhaps we may not see them quite as clearly as we could wish; and their offerings are those best gifts of heart and mind, and soul, which every good woman covets for her child: the right point of view, and the spirit of poverty; beautiful thoughts, and peace of mind; obedience, and a love of work; eyes that can see, and wings of faith; hope, and a thankful nature; a strong will, and a heart of gold.

Then comes that wicked old creature whose name is *Laissez aller*, and she says: "What a bother! It is not quite unnecessary? And why take such an amount of trouble when common sense is really all the wretched child will need"? Her back is bent with the burden of living, her face is wrinkled, her hair is gray, and her eyes are on

the ground. With crippled hands she clutches the stick on which she is obliged to lean because her own feet are unable to support her.

"Wings indeed!" says she. "Successful people don't have wings. A well-stocked purse is all they strive after!" And out of her own purse she takes a packet labelled "Maxims of the World," and scatters seeds of pride, sloth, envy, covetousness, and all uncharitableness, around the unconscious child; which seeds at once begin to grow, and grow with such rapidity that a looker-on might well suppose no infant could survive the pressure and the clamour of such a treacherous environment.

Lastly there comes the queen of all the godmothers, carrying a volume, which she places in the small child's bookcase, saying: "Here is the A.B.C. of education. Here is the best of all earthly friends, the safest guide. From this book, day by day, there will come forth a memory which stands out in direct opposition to the false maxims of the world." Then she goes down upon her knees, and thanks God that the power of good *is* stronger than the power of evil; and just because she has no confidence in herself she has the utmost trust in Him.

Watching her as she kneels night after night beside the cradle, picking up all the mistakes of the day, and arranging beautiful impressions for the morrow, her husband knows that this last and greatest of the godmothers is *the real mother of the child.* He does not say much, but he notices a good deal; and he could tell you, if he liked, how all those wonderful gifts, which people imagine are brought by the fairies, are really given by the mother of the child herself. And he could tell you also (though nothing would ever induce him to do so) that

And all I give is given to One.
I might mistake my dearest son,
But never the Son who cannot change.

ALICE MEYNELL.

Laissez aller is the mother also—when a reaction sets in, after she has been worn out with bad nights and early mornings, and new teeth and great anxiety—but his loyalty forbids him even to remember such words as "nervous-breakdown," "highly-strung," and "over-wrought." Instead of dwelling on these unfortunate occasions he thinks of Hans Anderson's story of the mother who even offered to drink up the lake, and he always whispers, "You *can* do it," for he believes that there is no limit to a good woman's powers of generosity and self-sacrifice.

You are that good woman, and you *can* do it; please make up your mind that you *will*. I do not mean drink up Hans Anderson's lake, I mean make up your mind that you will train your children well. Of course it does demand hard work, and patience, and no end of trouble, and every kind of thing like that; and the first appreciable results may be tired eyes, and headaches—even heartaches—but these are only by the way. The Queen of Mothers, who walks along the Purgative Way, must expect to wear a crown of thorns. And your husband will help you. What a man loves is a good woman, and above all a good mother.

THE FLAG OF FREEDOM

This service is a perfect liberty.

W. J. Dawson.

Life lies before thee, hardly stepped on yet,
Like a green prairie, fresh, and full of flowers.
Life lies before thee for experiment.

W. H. Davies.

And he who gives a child a home
Builds palaces in Kingdom Come.

John Masefield.

THE FLAG OF FREEDOM

THE question is: What will you give to your child? Of course I know you want to give it something. Have I not seen you, when you were away for a holiday, looking wistfully in every toy-shop window, trying to find a suitable present to take home to your little four-year-old? And did you not at last, in desperation, spend more than you could quite afford on a mechanical car, when really a small watering-can or a box of coloured beads would have pleased your Michael just as much, if not far more. (I suppose his name *is* Michael? Now-a-days everybody's little boy seems to be called Michael, and a good thing too, standing, as it does, for strength—the one who has no doubt he will be a victor in the contest).

But, as I was saying, only those who have experienced it can tell the joy of a small watering-can (perhaps only those who have a sympathetic Mummy), how in watering the flowers you are able to get your shoes and socks wet several times a day; whilst as for beads! no sooner do you start threading them than the box is sure to upset all over the floor, and then what a scramble you have searching under tables and chairs! And what fun for everybody to be exclaiming all day afterwards, "Hullo, Mike! here's

another of your lost beads!"

But the idea in purchasing that mechanical toy, was to give your son the best. You know that you represent, in his estimation, the owner of the world, and you rightly consider that it is up to you to hand out its treasures with a lavish hand.

In the same loving, generous spirit, I am sure you want to give your child a fair start-off on life's mysterious journey; you want to let him benefit by all that your mistakes and disappointments have taught you, you want him to begin, as it were, where you leave off . . . . .

And you leave off, I imagine, dissatisfied with the negation of all spiritual things, realizing that, after all, there may be something better than the standpoint of the materialist. You are not very clear perhaps as to exactly what it is, but you know that you want to give it to your child.

So here come I this afternoon to ask you to let me be your shopman—your mental, spiritual shopman—polite, persuasive—displaying before you the treasures from my store : not supposing that it is possible for you to like them all, only cherishing a hope that you may be able to adapt one or two to your particular circumstances.

My store is called Impossible Ideals, and the first of the goods which I shall set before you has been named the Spirit of Poverty.

However, I am not wedded to any especial form of words : the Simple Life, the Brotherhood of Man, Equality of Opportunity, if you should prefer those terms, will suit me just as well. Let us pretend that in my shop I provide the goods and you attach the labels—any ticket, with any price, because the value of a thing must vary according to

O Flower of utter joy,
My treasure, and God's plan!
A wild rose is my boy;
O Flower of utter joy.
Time never must destroy
My flower, and call it man.
O Flower of utter joy,
My treasure, and God's plan!

ARMEL O'CONNOR.

the development of the person who values it. All I unswervingly retain is my conviction, borne out by the results of half a century of strenuous idealism, that it is the impossible which turns out true.

Long ago I had a drawing master who used to go round whispering to his pupils that his tip for not thinking about the mouth when you begin to paint a face, was worth a hundred thousand pounds. At the time it seemed, to some of us, as if it were possibly worth less; but of course he thought he knew. And I am inclined to imitate his exaggeration by telling you that when all the pleasures of the world come to be measured out, you can place the Spirit of Poverty in the other scale and weigh it down with joy. But first, of course, we must arrange our point of view.

Let us begin by taking it as an axiom that all good things are common.

Nothing which is really worth having costs more than is within the means of everybody. If you are making notes, if you happen to have a pencil handy, please jot that down: everything that is really worth having is within the reach of everybody. Thank you. (Does it not sound rather like a conjuror asking some gentleman in the audience to lend him his watch? I want you to lend me your prejudices for the nonce. I want you to hand up your family traditions, your life-long convictions, your tightly-hugged superstitions, your reason and your logic. Lend me, in fact, your ear—the other ear, the one that is not quite so deafened by the noisy clamour of the commercial world).

Now how would you like to take your little boy this flag? It waves for liberty, fraternity, equality; but it is

not red. The flag of the idealist is gold, and blue and white: blue for sky, gold for sunshine, and—for the sake of not being too out of touch with the ordinary faculty of seeing—white for the clouds. Clouds, I find, alas! we are obliged to admit as a possibility in our minds' atmosphere. I used not to think so, but it was proved to me by the most beautiful woman I ever knew—a woman not only beautiful in herself, but an ardent and unselfish lover of truth and beauty everywhere. She is dead now. She loved people too much. She wanted to give everybody everything—so at twenty-six they killed her. They always kill you if you love them very, very much and want to make them idealistically happy, and give them all the things they long for, and the things they think they cannot possibly get. I daresay you will kill me. Because I love you all so very much, and I want to give you all the treasures of the universe, and to show you how to give them in even greater measure to your children. It is only natural that you should want to kill me, I do not blame you in the least, I only request you to wait until I have said what I want to say. Just put your stones down for awhile, and let me have my turn first, throwing words at you.

I want to say a word about those clouds, and it is this: your children may be brought up to perceive only the sunshine and the clear blue sky, but clouds will inevitably pass from time to time across the heavens which their parents see. It was this that my beautiful friend discovered and explained to me—I should never have guessed it till I knew her and her work. I thought the sun shone permanently on all of us out from the cloudless blue. She realised that at times the vision splendid *is*

obscured, and that the happiest, truest way in which to look upon apparent disillusionment—even upon the dark night of the soul—is just as passing clouds. "*ça passe, ça passe*," as our friends over the water are being taught to say.

So, as you have decided to take my flag home to your children (what did you say, Sir, at the back of the room? You had not decided on anything of the sort! I beg your pardon, my mistake) so, as I was saying, having decided to take something home, one seems justified in concluding that there is a home to which you take it. Convenient houses are of course becoming increasingly difficult to find, yet people have to go on seeking for them, not being yet such turtle doves as to inhabit one small room in peace.

And if on the material plane it is a matter of difficulty to get the right climate, and the right aspect and the right accommodation for your family, how very much harder it is to decide on the best mental environment and the best spiritual atmosphere! So please to let me be your house-agent: and make a note as a corollary to the first: the best and most beautiful thought-home for little children—the easiest, happiest place in which their growing minds can dwell—is in that Ocean of Love where they are everlastingly cared for and protected, and where the foundations are secure. (Venice! piles driven in! you say. One pile, perhaps, with a stout cross bar that has kept the City from falling these nearly two thousand years, but I was not going to touch on that just yet). Good parents will see that their children are provided with such a home—a home for their minds—a region where they can really, truly, *live*.

To live one must not only exist in one's own house in Ludlow in Shropshire in England, on the 25th of April, 1922, one must live in all towns, in all countries, in all ages, everywhere, everywhen, North and South and East and West, before Christ and after Christ. One must live in the Universe, one must live in eternity, in the whole, great, wonderful world of human thought and will and imagination, of feeling and emotion and ecstasy, call it what you like—the Cosmic Consciousness—the Ocean of Divine Love—or the Kingdom of Heaven.

Of course my subject is essentially religious, but I am most anxious to avoid using any dogmatic expression which might jar on anybody of any sort of belief; because I know that although we really all aim at the same mark, we have got into the way of speaking in so many different languages that even the most sympathetic soul-friend sometimes appears to be an enemy in disguise.

That is why, our fathers killed the prophets. It was not so much that they disagreed with what the prophets said; everybody knew that destruction and desolation was likely to come upon the wicked city, and that a hundred and forty thousand horsemen, with all their sheep and goats and oxen were likely to perish miserably in a single day; but the prophet was a plain, straightforward man, and he did not trouble to mince his words, and his hearers could not help thinking that the way he put it was rather rude. Judged by the standards of polite society of course it was rude. You would think me rude if I came straight up to you and said:

"You are an abomination of desolation dwelling in a holy place: roaring lions, and evening wolves, senseless men without faith, filling your homes with every kind of

iniquity and deceit. Your right arm shall quite wither away, and your eyes shall be utterly darkened."

So I am not going to say it. I do not even think it. I think you are all parents with the highest, the noblest, and the best intentions; hampered and restricted a little perhaps by early associations and false impressions, but parents undoubtedly anxious for your children to get nearer to an ideal state of existence than that which at present seems possible for you. I know you long for the next generation to have more sweetness and light, and you have resolved that your children shall grow up to serve humanity, and help to bring about a greater equality of happiness than seems likely to be within our reach just yet.

That is all right, is it not? That sounds quite polite. Though it is simply a matter of translating the predictions of a minor prophet into the courtesy of a twentieth century politician.

So please once again get out your note books—not your stones—and even if you feel at first a little opposed to some of my theories allow me to go on with what I want to say :—

I do not believe in heredity (as generally understood), I do not think of a child as a little person containing so much talent and so many qualities which its teachers have to bring out. I believe that every child is that to us, and no more, than Love makes it to be—than primarily its Mother's love makes it to be.

Just as from the first day of the baby's life she takes care to give it suitable nourishment for its body; so, I believe, from the first day (and for the nine months before that day) she must take care to give it good, simple,

beautiful impressions for its mind. I believe in the importance of the very earliest association of ideas; and above all in the lasting results of a good mother's intention, (the intention is the soul of the action: the action itself may sometimes seem to fail; the intention is always rewarded by a result). And when I say the intention of the mother, I mean the father too. He may not have quite the same opportunities, the arrangement of nursery meals and amusements do not perhaps exactly constitute his province; but he upholds his wife in all her work of motherly love and unselfish devotion; and he undoubtedly has to take a liberal share, towards evening—in bearing with her irritability and fatigue, her neglect of his comfort, and her forgetfulness of his concerns.

(Yes, do not be alarmed. This does not sound at all idealistic, I know. But we had better be practical, and face the real state of affairs). The father of a carefully brought up child *does* sometimes come home to a tired wife, and an untidy house, his socks undarned, his buttons off, his dinner not ready, or insufficiently cooked or badly burnt. Poor man! What a state of things for him to come back to, you say; but I lay stress upon it because it is true to life, true to our human weakness. Long days, short nights, and the crying which accompanies the cutting of teeth must wear out the nerves of the most idealistic of mothers; and that is just where you get the benefit of having clouds upon your mental horizon. You—the husband I mean now—do not at once suppose that everything is going to the dogs, that the ideals after which you and your wife are striving have turned out a complete mistake, that the sky is permanently overcast and the sun will never shine again. Not at all. And by no means.

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You twiddle your thumbs and look up like a popular comedian and whistle "Wait till the clouds roll by."

It is an enormous help, on these trying occasions, to have some little phrase or catch-word which brings back all sorts of pleasant associations to you both.

"Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag," may do it.

"Smile awhile and while you smile another smiles, etc.," is a useful one.

Each household probably will invent a watch-word of its own. In our little home my husband always chants "Benedicamus Domino" as he opens the front door, and I sing "Deo Gratias" back to him. That is because we have resolved to be thankful for everything—even the things we do not like. And the habit remains although the will is weak. After singing out "Deo Gratias" I very likely go on to grumble at him for being late, and point out a list of grievances and complaints and bothers, and he—what do you think he does? (I forget if I have told you that I have got the dearest hubby in the world?) he just understands that I do not really mean a word I say, that I am utterly fagged out, and all my nerves on edge; and he proceeds at once to tell me something very nice and appreciative and flattering which Mrs. So and So remarked to him about me half-an-hour ago. How is that for tact?

My husband believes in tact—in making the other person feel that everything is all right—and in prayer. I believe he always prays for me on his way home. And perhaps, now that I have let you into my confidence a little, you will suspect he has to pray for me a lot. Well, he has. I have never tried to make any secret about it. But then I must just tell you that each evening—so as to end off the day on the right note—I say, "Please dear

forgive me for all my faults. If I have in any way displeased, or disedified, or disobeyed you, will you forgive me? ''

I was telling this lately, by way of helping her, to a newly-married friend, and to my surprise she was not quite satisfied. She is one of those women who are very quick at the up-take, and she felt that the story was not really finished.

''And what does your husband answer?'' she wanted to know. So I will tell you. He says one word; a word, which from its dictionary meaning might not be supposed to conduce towards harmonious matrimonial relations; a word which at first sight would appear totally inapplicable to the situation; a word varying little in Anglo-Saxon, Dutch, German, French, Low German, Danish, Gælic, and Armoric—with its root probably in Latin; rodo, to gnaw.

Just the name of a rodent mammal familiar to everyone; and yet, in fact a word which every man and woman with a large heart and a merry wit will feel at once to be exactly the required expression.

It goes like this; I will re-act the scene for you. Picture the penitent wife, truly and deeply sorry, for all the horrid things that have slipped out somehow—things she did not mean, and never meant to say; wife keenly sensible of having spoiled the evening for the man she loves; realizing how little she improves from week to week and year to year, and what a trial she must be to her husband's magnamimity and powers of forebearance—

Wife: ''Good night, my darling, and please will you forgive me for all my faults?''

Husband (taking her in his arms and looking at her with inexpressible affection): Rats!''

Now, having got on to thoroughly good terms with my audience, (you look more comfortable using your stones as footstools, and I do not feel so nervous as I did at the start-off, when you held them ready in your hands), let us just see where we are, and count up our chickens. I want to be at one with you before they are hatched.

Luckily there are rats and rats, and those which we are going to take for our greatest common denominator only eat up the petty annoyances of life, leaving our little future hopes still to run free.

I think we have found our greatest common denominator in "Rats!" have we not? And I believe I know whom I shall be safe in taking for our least common multiple.

In galloping through a world of experience for more than half a century I have met a good many people (perhaps, at the pace I went, I may even have overtaken some) people of every other sort and kind of religious and irreligious persuasion, and I have made the dearest and the kindest friends amongst them all. But whatever the particular shade of opinion might be I have always found that the one man we can talk of safely—and by safely I mean without controversy, which I detest, and never found did anybody any good—the one man whom we all admire, and would like, in some measure to imitate if we could, is St. Francis of Assisi. Is it not so? The man with his feet on the ground and his heart in the sky—or shall I say the man whose heart sang like a lark in the heavens as he walked on air. Is he not your ideal of a good man? though not the one which we are all called upon to follow too literally.

Why not his Master? some of you may ask. Why not the Christ? Well, just because St. Francis *was* a man.

Even some of my greatest friends who admire his Great Master with all their hearts, waste precious time that we might spend in talking of His Beatitudes and His simplicity and His heroic self-sacrifice, in arguing as to whether He was or was not also the Son of God. Now with St. Francis fortunately nobody ever wants to dispute about that. There is no question that as a mere human being he followed after Christ, in a kindly, humorous, romantic, merry, exuberant spirit, which for seven centuries has gone straight home to the heart of all mankind. There is something about the Poverello with his "Brother Wolf" and his "little Sisters the Birds," and his delicious dinner of dry crusts, quite irresistible. Brought up by a commercial father who wanted to put him into the hardware or the haberdashery line, and make a prosperous and wealthy merchant of him, Francis deliberately chose his Lady Poverty. Wealth? Position? Comfort? Human respect? None of that for him! He was out for adventure, in what almost seems to have been a hitherto untried region of the spirit. He combined the romantic chivalry of a Mediæval knight on the battle-field with the voluntary mortification of a hermit in the desert. No serving over the counter for a heart and mind like that! and which of us can call him foolish for abandoning a life of ease that he was sure of, to embark upon an unknown quest? Are there not moments when we all would fain sail for the North Pole, fly to the summit of Mount Everest or, ride a camel to Kufara? You cannot sit still and count your thumbs from morning to night when you feel young and well and jolly! You have at least to be off for a long cross-country ramble far away from streets and factories and railway stations—and you reckon it for luck if on the

way you find a lame dog to be helped over a stile.

It is in the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi that I believe we shall at last discover a clue to the at-one-ment of the world. And *there* I believe it to be within the bounds of possibility for our children to arrive.

That is why I am here to plead with you to-day.

That is why I am trying to walk in those strong, brave, poverty-loving footsteps. That is why I belong, as I believe in heart and spirit at least we all belong, to the Third Order of St. Francis. Did someone say the Fourth Order? A good idea! for in following the Saint of Assisi we do feel rather as if we were trying to live in the Fourth Dimension.

So let us say that in theory at least, by admiration and desire, we have all resolved that our children shall belong to the Fourth Order of St. Francis.

That we accept his as our point of view.

That we resolve to be very goodnatured and merry and tolerant with each other.

That we realize we are all liable to make mistakes in family life, owing to our human frailty, and that there must of necessity be passing clouds; but that the sun still shines, and the sky is blue.

* * * *

A flag each? Thank you. I am so glad I brought a lot—exactly enough to go all round!

* * * *

And having decided on the right point of view, next comes the practical manner of arriving at the spirit of poverty.

DELICIOUS CRUSTS OF BREAD

Ye have seen perchance
Some little child for very gladness dance
Over a scarcely-noticed worthless thing,
Worth more to him than ransom of a king.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

The little hands that never sought earth's prizes.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

DELICIOUS CRUSTS OF BREAD

BEGIN with its clothes. Anyone who has ever looked after a baby knows that it is a creature most difficult to dress. Its natural instinct is to resent fallals and furbelows, and it meets the very suggestion of a sleeve with fingers widely spread. The person who has the dressing of it gets hot and nervous and exhausted trying to bring the baby's primary inclinations into line with what is expected of it by civilized society. *That* is why we make the daily dressing process such an unnecessarily long and complicated affair; because of what some nurse considers usual, or because of what some visitor to the nursery will expect.

At one bound I ask you to come with me to the cave in Bethlehem and see how Mary's kingly visitors were perfectly satisfied with the simplicity with which she clothed Her Son.

They were wise men, you say. Yes, that is just what I was leading up to; wise visitors. And is it not a matter of your own choice, to a great extent, what manner of visitor you have to your own nursery? Why make it a place where all the folly of the world can congregate? Why should not your baby have wise visitors too? Of

course I understand that everybody in the neighbourhood will want to come. They will naturally feel curious to see it when they hear that yours is *the* most wonderful and beautiful baby in the world. (It is the most beautiful and wonderful baby in the world, is it not? No mother would be worth calling a mother if at any rate her first baby was not the most marvellous infant ever seen).

But even so, your friends, and neighbours, loving you (as I am sure they do, because you have always been so sweet to them), will be ready to accept your child at your valuation; and if you tell them, quite simply, that you are starting your little son in life as a follower of Christ, not to need many material things, not to expect the best of this world's goods; but to walk with St. Francis in his Master's footsteps, merrily, kindly, always ready to share, and to give the largest half to others; if you say; "look at his little fingers and his lovely shell-like nails! and think what glorious work these hands may do some day in the service of mankind! Look at these feet, are they not exquisitely shaped? Think of the long straight road these feet will tread as my son carries the good news of Universal Brotherhood all round the world!" Your visitors will look at you a little wonderingly and tenderly; having expected that you would be enraptured with the possession of a first-born son, but not having been prepared for your taking it in this way; less a present from life to you, than a gift from you to all mankind. And if I know anything of the best side of human nature I can assure you that the stout, tight-laced, middle-aged lady from next door, who had come in ready to admire the lace-trimmed, hand-embroidered, soft, white garments of your new born baby, will bend over his cradle with tears brimming up into her

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eyes, before she throws her arms around your neck and says "God bless you dear—and I am sure He will."

And that first tear which falls upon your baby's golden hair is the first jewel of his eternal crown. Not by fierce opposition, not by heated argument, not by learned disquisition, will your son's victories be won. It is by his sincerity, by the courage with which he lives up to his own convictions, that he will win over others. And it is by this means that you, whilst he lies in his cradle, are winning them for him. Such love, such ambition as yours is arresting, astounding, in a world where, as a general rule, nobody cares very much more about one thing than another.

And although your visitors may not come often, perhaps may not even call again, that does not matter in the least. Personally I find that to my cottage very few people, unless they want something, ever come a second time. They like it, they write and say, they like my way of living very much indeed, but they do not think it probable that they will find themselves in my neighbourhood again, for many years to come—and they are just going to cherish our one delightful interview as a treasure amongst recollections . . . . .

Because a home run on such lines as I suggest becomes a test (some people, alas! feel it to be a protest, a reproach, though God knows it is not meant for that), you must be prepared for less frequent visits, and thankfully accept a state of things which leaves more space for the growing mind of your child. Too much petty intercourse with men and women of the commercial or fashionable world leaves you no life whatever of your own. You do not want the tumultuous rumbling of the distant traffic echoing against

your nursery walls. You do not want to be so enveloped in the thick texture of the money-making world that the progress of your own life's pattern becomes impossible. But for every score of acquaintances you lose I promise you that you will gain a friend.

About the time that I lost everybody (on Betty's account) I gained a few real friends, worth calling friends, who made up for it over and over again. And amongst them was a man who always chose out the unfortunate, the ungainly, the plain, the odd; a man who preferred the companion of his walks to wear old shoes. He was well-dressed himself and very good looking, and belonged to a family sufficiently rich to have been in the habit of buying new footgear when they needed it; (of course I really mean people who owned beautiful, large country houses and lived very comfortably indeed); well, it seemed that this man's great desire, ever since he was a boy, had been to have a really shabby companion, a person whose shoes were tattered and torn, with the sole half off, and going flop-flop, as she walked along. So that one Sunday morning, as he and I walked back from church, with my best Sunday shoes going flop-flop, as we went along (what my week-day shoes did I am not going to tell you, nor whether, in fact, I had a week-day pair at all), and as he listened to my shoes, he simply flushed with joy, and laughed so heartily all the rest of the way that it was the merriest walk we ever had. Of course it was very uncomfortable going for me; but he assured me that that did not matter. For him it was an immense joke, a unique experience.

He never forgot about it. Oh, how he teased me! Apparently this was the exquisite moment for which he had been waiting all his life; and our friendship from that

day assumed proportions only equalled by our mutual admiration for St. Francis of Assisi. Oh, such a human friendship, deep, true, fantastic. It lasted till the Germans killed him, unarmed, doing a brave and friendly act—no, it has outlived death, deeper, truer, and perhaps as fantastic. In any of the little difficulties incidental to a life of holy poverty, I always feel him laughing near me, and even if I could afford to buy new shoes now, I should prefer old ones for the sake of the merriest follower of St. Francis I ever knew.

He was a saint.

And please observe that when in these papers I refer to anyone as a Saint, I mean a really nice person, merry and bright, and kind and sweet, and funny; reserving to myself, like Alice in Wonderland, the right to make words mean exactly what I mean, and "it is the same thing with me" as it was with the Dormouse. So—no matter what other conception of the term you may have been led to form from reading badly-written lives of these most interesting and delightful specimens of mankind—I ask you to remember that when I say a Saint I mean a human being with so clear a vision, and so strong a will, that he is able to do what he intends to do, unrestricted by the generally accepted conditions of this material world; uncircumvented by the prison walls of superstitious custom.

How I should have loved to be a Saint myself! but when I obtained a knowledge of this kind of possible state I felt that I had acquired it too late to put it in practice easily. It struck me that to live as a Saint, under present conditions, without self-consciousness, one must begin from the start. So, fearing that I should never succeed in being one myself I determined to adopt a baby, and be the

mother of a saint instead.

In this world, and during this short life, people have different ambitions, but this is mine. I came across the words, long ago, in large print, in some magazine; THE MOTHER OF A SAINT, and I cut them out and made a scrap-book round the thought (as you might do) of all the ideas and verses and pictures which I thought would help my child. Then I adopted Betty, aged five weeks. (I was not married at the time, and let me quote, for the consolation of unmarried women, the words of one who knows: "it does not make the very slightest difference to your love for the baby, or to the baby's love for you, whether it is adopted or whether it comes to you in the usual way.")

Oh Mothers do be more ambitious for your children! covet only the best gifts. From the moment Betty became my own, I resolved to devote all my time and talents and experience to her training. Until she was twenty-one, and her own mistress, I determined to give her every chance to be well and happy, good and kind and amusing, clever and accomplished and beautiful; not strictly beautiful (her funny little turn-up nose seemed to preclude that possibility) but I intended her to look so bright and sweet and healthy—so alive in the best sense, that the sight of her should bring the suggestion of beauty to other people.

I made no secret, in those days, about my intentions, and, as you will guess, my enthusiasm did not meet with much encouragement. Most of my women friends contented themselves with the protest of ceasing to ask me to their houses; a few took trouble to explain that such an attempt as mine had never been made before, and must of necessity turn out to be a failure. One proud Salopian

exclaimed "What? that child beautiful!" and considered that everything possible had then been said. Only one man, a doctor, a wise, large-hearted man of the world, realized the psychological value of my experiment and told me that he should watch the growth of my adopted baby's body and mind with professional interest, and that he looked forward to seeing the results in 1925, a date not so far distant now as it seemed then!

Heredity was what seemed to trouble most people. "Think what she may inherit!" was the way they bothered me. She is an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven I asserted with the utmost confidence, but no one seemed satisfied with that! The real difference between adopting a baby and having one of your own, lies in the fact that your friends feel justified in the first case in worrying you about heredity, assuming that all qualities of mind and body are inherited according to fixed laws; whilst I am perfectly certain that the mother's intention and the child's earliest environment will over-rule all the supposed results of genetic research. Statistics never trouble me in the least. Just as a clever lawyer can drive a coach and four through any law that was ever made, so an enthusiastic pioneer can push a way through the worst tangle of the world's statistics.

My theory is very simple:

All children are intended to be inheritors of the Kingdom of Christ. That is the only inheritance worth considering. And as for what they are going to be, they are all called to be Saints. It is for us to see that they know how to answer the call.

I maintain that the idea of all those qualities which in after life will form the character of your child must be

cherished during its infancy by the mother; and not only cherished in a sentimental way, but practised unswervingly in her own daily life. You influence others not much by what you say and teach, but very, very largely by what you are.

Your daily habits form not only your own character but your child's destiny.

Is this not stating the case rather too strongly? you ask. Not a bit. Remember all the great men who have had good mothers, or good nurses, or some other holy influence in their earliest days. In every nursery there must be a bias, I only ask you to see that in yours it is in the right direction—the direction of holy poverty.

Let your children be ever ready to welcome Christ in the person of the poor. To those who expect wonders, wonderful things do happen. There was once an old woman who sold sweets in a little shop in Galway, who used to say: "Refuse not any, for one may be The Christ."

"It may be He!" is easily said by the child at Christmas time who waits upon the poor; and although we grown-up people are terribly hampered by the traditions of that particular class of society to which we belong, the minds of children, happily, are unfettered in this respect, neither do there seem to be for them any limitations of time and space. So, for their sakes, be ever ready to welcome Christ in whatever guise He comes knocking at your door. Do not be like that mother who busied herself to make a cake, and set the cottage in order, and then failed to recognize Him, when the King, for whom she was preparing, came in the garment of a tramp—and was welcomed by her child. Do not drive out the travel-

With thine eyes of trust
And thy mirth, where under
All the world's hope lay
In thy heart of wonder.

ROBERT BRIDGES.

stained wanderer for fear his muddy foot-marks should disfigure your kitchen floor. The child who takes down the best plates from the dresser, and plays games with him upon the hearth, gets nearer to a knowledge of the Kingdom of God.

(You know the play I mean, by Lady Gregory) and will not every good mother exclaim with Queen Louise: "The children's world, that is world enough for me."

At Christmas time, at any rate it is so easy to make their world our own.

Betty always delighted in Christmas. Her early life was so uneventful that going out into the Foldgate Lane, to gather sprigs of holly with which to decorate the pictures, counted as a glorious treat; and the bunch of mistletoe which we hung up in the entrance to our Martha-room provided her with all sorts of fun. She tried hard never to pause beneath it, lest I kissed her, whilst at every favourable opportunity she lay in wait to take advantage of my inadvertence. Oh, the light-heartedness of extreme youth! I always tried to let Betty have a lovely Christmas-time; and although we could not afford to purchase many presents, she immensely enjoyed the four and twenty penny toys which formed her "buying-without-money-and-without-price shop." The customers were a dozen of the very poorest little children we could find.

For several days beforehand I used to let Betty play with these shop toys so that she might not have any difficulty in being generous when the "customers" arrived. "Generosity made easy!" some people used to laugh and say. Very likely; but I feel certain that it is better to have your generosity made easy for you in childhood, than not to have any generosity at all when you grow up.

And à propos of that, when Betty was thirteen months old and just beginning to stand upon her feet and almost toddle, I spent much care and many hours in making her a pale blue frock.

She watched the process with great interest, especially the embroidering of a cross with white silk and mother-love upon the chest. And when the dainty garment was complete I yielded to her importunate request to put it on at once. Journeyings beneath the table and prolonged investigations of the coal box necessitated its being sent to the wash next day; and the washerwoman's little girl (who was twice the age and about the same size as mine) fell in love with it, and was heard to say how very much she would like to keep it for her own. A mutual friend informed me of the fact, and a battle royal ensued in my own mind.

"Give it to her at once," said Betty's Angel.

"But you will never have time and energy to make the whole thing over again," said Self. "Think of the labour you have spent upon it."

"Think of the Crib at Bethlehem," said Betty's Angel.

"But you do so want your little daughter to look sweet on Christmas-day," pleaded Self.

"Her soul will look far sweeter clothed in Love," replied the Angel.

"Won't people think she looks too shabby in her old every-day dress?" asked Self.

"People did not think her patron saint looked shabby in her every-day dress," firmly replied the Angel. "Don't you remember how her father's ambassadors reported to him that she was simply glorious?"

So we thought of the Crib at Bethlehem, besought

dear Saint Elizabeth of Hungary to pray for us, and with many a heartache handed over the precious little garment to the washerwoman's child; resolving that on Christmas-day Betty should look "glorious" instead.

And now a wonderful thing happened (which of course ought not to have surprised me, but it did): when we reached home we found that the postman had just left a parcel from a rich friend, containing two beautifully embroidered frocks, besides a jacket, a bonnet, a pair of boots, and a dress-and-undress doll! I nearly cried. It was such a shock—the shock of having got beyond the ordinary bounds of material existence, and of having, all in a moment, stepped into the Kingdom of Heaven, where those who love God receive a hundredfold, not only in the world to come, but even during this present life.

That was a mystic Christmas! truly exemplifying "Give and it shall be given unto you."

Ask for nothing and refuse nothing, seems a safe rule when one embarks on a life of voluntary poverty.

One at a time and the rest in a cupboard—that is the idea. That is what I am going to ask you to aim at; whether it be the arrangement of flowers in a Japanese vase, or a toy engine on the floor of an English nursery, or a dinner of dry crusts on a rock in Italy, the wisest plan is to concentrate with pleasure on the thing that is yours for the moment, certain that when the time comes for you to require something else, then the something else will be provided—and if not exactly the very thing which you expected, then a thing which that Great Beneficent Power, in the hollow of Whose Mightly Hand we insignificant atoms lie, knows to be even better for you.

It was very clever of St. Gertrude to think of shutting her eyes if ever she had to choose. It makes an amusing game to play with your children if you end up by each one saying; "This is the very best for me!" And the lesson is: nice people are pleased with what they get, and treat their possessions with care and reverence. Any vulgar person can waste his goods and chuck beautiful things about and say "I can afford to buy more." A man like that never really owns anything. Nothing is your very own unless you love it. It is not yours just because you have the legal power to sell it.

It is yours because you have the power to appreciate it—it is yours, to all intents and purposes, because it gives you joy.

One thing at a time and the rest in a cupboard, sums up in a few words the whole theory of wealth and the happiness of ownership. Whatever it may be that is before you, think of it, and admire it. "Be a whole man to each thing that you do." Never dissipate the mind with multiplicity. All that you need for the present moment, you have; all that you may need to-morrow, and for the remainder of your life, is ready for you, waiting to come to you, somewhere in God's Cupboard, the Universe. That is the Truth. That is Art and Religion and Science all rolled into one. And could anyone ever invent a more thoroughly comfortable philosophy? Call it optimism, if you like. I do not care what people choose to call it, if only they will give the next generation a chance to grow up with that happy, confident attitude of mind—the time, and the place, and the goods and the right man all together!

Of course in one sense there is no time, no actual place,

and no individual man—I mean that no man should be thought of separately, cut off, and dissociated from the interests of everybody else. When you find that everything in your own particular circumstances is even better than you could have imagined, it is when you are striving for the welfare and the happiness of the whole human race. So please do give it a fair trial, this realization of the fact that ALL is GOOD. With your heart set in earnest on being kind, unselfish, pitiful, you cannot fail to become aware that you are dwelling in the Ocean of Divine Love.

The power which mankind seems to have lost, or shall I say has temporally obscured? is the power to see the best. With most of us, I fear, it is because our thoughts are running so strongly in some other direction, that for the time Truth cannot get a look in at all.

If eyes are tightly shut, how can they see? Or how shall we behold the glory of the sun if we keep gazing intently at a golden sovereign on the ground? Though it would surprise us, wouldn't it? to come suddenly upon a gold coin in the middle of the road, now that we have been so long accustomed to using paper money.

But I do not mean literally a coin of the realm. I mean the commercial mind, which prices everything, and classifies everything according to its price; the sort of mind which makes the accumulation of capital the standard of all success. Undoubtedly the love of money is the root of all evil, and its antithesis, the spirit of generosity, is the root of all true joy.

The man who really makes a success of his life is the man who every year is able to require less and less from the material world.

How household worries and anxieties vanish when

attacked in this happy vein! Even shopping in a country town becomes a pleasure, both to yourself and to the sweet, unintelligent shop-girl who offers you pink ribbon as a match for blue.

"All that I need is here," you affirm with conviction as you enter the shop, and although previously you had been under the impression that two yards of pale blue ribbon for your little girl's hat was what you actually required, looking at the shop-girl's patient, tired eyes, you quickly realize that pink will be even better; so thanking her for her very kind suggestion, you beg her acceptance of the bunch of lilies of the valley, which, with forethought you had tucked into your belt before leaving home. Do always go shopping with at least one bunch of flowers to give to somebody who serves you; and when your child is old enough to toddle by your side, please let it carry a basket of made-up nosegays too. And explain merrily, on the return journey that it does not matter in the least if you have got what you set out to buy (generally you haven't); but it does matter that everyone with whom you have come in contact, during your shopping expedition, is the happier for that brief intercourse.

Is not this the best definition of a gentleman: a man who respects himself, and respects others. And might we not define a member of "The Fourth Order of St. Francis" as: a man who reverences the Creator, and who reverences all His creatures? Such an one has absolute liberty of spirit. He is free in the best sense. He does not want anything; but if anything is put into his hand he touches it with affection and admiration.

Another Elizabeth—

> "she whose memory stirs
> The air of earth as with an angel's wings,
> And warms and moves the hearts of men, like hers;
> The sainted daughter of Hungarian Kings."—

Elizabeth Fry, was an ardent lover of the beauties of nature and observed them with delight in their smaller as well as in their larger features. A shell by the sea-side, a feather or a flower, would fill her heart with joy and tune her tongue to praise, while she gazed on it as an evidence of Divine Wisdom, Skill and Goodness.

How different an attitude of mind was that of the Spanish lady who tore her lace petticoat getting carelessly out of her carriage, and said, "It does not signify, I can buy another." The poor old woman who had spent a lifetime making that piece of lace was standing by, and heard her say it.

Please teach your children by your own beautiful example that it does not matter what one has, but it does immensely matter how you treat it. That is the real spirit of holy poverty which I am asking you to make your own.

You all delight in an adventure. Well, there is no adventure in the world to be compared to this Franciscan recklessness of "casting all your care upon a Bountiful Providence." Serve others willingly, lovingly, and gaily, without any thought of a direct payment for your service, and I assure you that their Heavenly Father and yours will inspire someone to provide for your own needs. Help nearly always comes, I find, from some unexpected source. But wherever they come from, when they are necessary, the crusts of bread *do* come, and they taste delicious. Of that you may rest assured. St. Francis told Brother Masseo, who was inclined to grumble at having "neither

cloth, nor knives, nor plates, nor porringer, nor house, nor table, nor man-servant, nor maid-servant''—only pieces of bread which they had begged—that they were not worthy of so great a treasure!

From him we learn how—free from all earth's lesser interests (not deprived of them) we can give our children beautiful thoughts and peace of mind.

THE KEY OF THE NURSERY DOOR

But who shall have the key that opens it?—ah, who? ah, who?

THOMAS EDWARD BROWN.

The dragon to its own Hesperides
Is gated under slow-revolving changes,
Manifold doors of heavy-hinged years.

FRANCIS THOMPSON.

Nothing is real that brings annoy.

JAMES RHOADES.

THE KEY OF THE NURSERY DOOR

I HOPE you are brave. It is easy enough to say that a certain amount of discouragement is necessary in order to accomplish great work—but Oh! when I think of the amount of courage which you will require to keep the enemies of your children on the wrong side of the nursery door, I can only hope that you have got the spirit of a Catherine Douglas, and the arm, and are prepared, in an emergency, to use it.

They have all sorts of names, these bogies, these dragons, these infectious monsters, these wreckers of domestic peace—such harmless ordinary every day appellations, that you would never suspect them of bringing disastrous consequences in their train, unless somebody kindly put you on your guard.

They come by water, they come by cheese, they sail in in coffee cups, they flit in by moonlight, they glide along with poisonous fangs beside your favourite little slow-worm in the garden. They even strike you unawares, all of a heap, sometimes, with hands upraised to bless, and (let me whisper it for fear of mortally offending your great aunt Matilda) they will be certain to creep in with the

night air if you allow your children to sleep with the window open! Your business, dear devoted mother, is to prevent them.

But they are so disguised, so subtle in their ways, so persistent in their claim of entry, and so strong to remain, that if you do not at once attack them and cast them out they will sit tight, I warn you, and get permanently the upper hand.

To put it plainly your Aunt Matilda is a dragon. She does not know it, but she is. And her power is summed up in the one word fear. She and her ilk are always trying to instil children with fear. Accept no excuses in mitigation of her offence, close your eyes to her proofs, refuse to listen to her statistics. Even "a curious coincidence" is not a satisfactory explanation. This is the truth: we get what we have been taught to get, what we expect to get, what our minds have been trained to anticipate. Fear is your child's greatest enemy: never let it be aroused.

How well I remember my father insisting that a horse on a long journey should have a good drink as it crossed the ford! and that his children should be provided with cold water on a summer's day when they ran about and got thirsty. Nearly every horsey friend he ever had vehemently contested the first point, and all his sisters and his cousins and his aunts the second. But he was right.

It is the same with coffee. Anyone can sleep after drinking an evening cup of coffee—if she believes she can. But have we not all some acquaintance who declares that she (it is usually a she, is it not?) cannot sleep one wink all night? She has asserted it so often that the idea has obtained a strong hold over her sub-conscious mind; and

the emotion of fear has a special power to reinforce the auto-suggestion. It is quite useless to try to persuade her to drink coffee and to tell her that it will not keep her awake, because it will. She declares it will, and it will. She knows that she needs sleep and that the reasonable thing to do when she goes to bed is to sleep; but her silly imagination has given that harmless little drop of brown liquid the artificial power to spoil her night. Do not argue with her, she is past all hope of cure, and perhaps one must not altogether blame her. How different might have been her fate had she been brought up on "Struwwel Peter!" beneath that yellow cottage with the blue curtain where "in the window from a cup the huntsman's wife drank coffee up." She would then have understood that when your husband goes a hunting, drinking coffee becomes the right and reasonable thing for you to do. But, as she was not properly instructed in her youth, see to it that she now stays on the far side of a well-locked door.

Your happy, healthy, plucky, little children shall not be allowed to grow up slaves to every kind of doubt and dread. Let them spill salt, walk under ladders, and get their feet wet as often as they please. Let them sleep with the window open, in sunlight, starlight, moonlight, and rain, if they enjoy it. Let them set forth on life as conquerors.

A jolly child does not easily catch cold unless some grown up person keeps telling it that it will. Colds are brought about by many circumstances, of which cold is the rarest and least important.

It is not the seeds of disease that you will find it hard to destroy; it is the *fear* of the growth of these things which plunges its root so deep into the young constitution that

the unearthing of it becomes a difficult problem in after life.

I am not denying the law of cause and effect; but I want you to choose the right cause so as to get a beautiful effect; always remembering that your body is not you—it is the material upon which the working of your mind becomes visible.

You know how when the magic-lantern-man finds he has got hold of the wrong picture he does not stand and rub at the white sheet; he steps back to the place where the lantern is and finds the right slide. So all I am really asking is that you should prevent people from providing your children with the wrong slides. See that they get the right ones at any cost. In vigilance it will cost you a good deal. Ruskin realized this difficulty when he revived the 1823 edition of Dame Wiggins of Lee, recommending her for the nursery because she relates nothing that is sad and portrays nothing that is ugly.

How few people, alas! can be relied on in this respect!

For instance: all his four years my Michael had gone off to bed with happy, holy thoughts, sure of the Angels watching and praying around him; and then one evening a very nice kind stranger came to see us, and it struck me that it would be a right and lovely thing for my dear little son to kneel and receive the benevolent old man's blessing. You would never guess what happened! My dear little son performed his part of the ceremony satisfactorily, and the old man with the benignant countenance looked at him, pondering for a few minutes, whilst we all waited in silence for his benediction.

"So you are going to bed now," he began in a rather pompous, theatrical voice which he evidently fancied would

lend force and importance to what he was going to say: "And are you going to dream of a lot of great big giants coming and standing round your bed?"

We were amazed! but I did not say "Idiot!" or bang him on his bald head. I spent half the night with Michael answering his terrified questions: What were giants? Why would the great big giants come and stand all round his bed? Then why did the old gentleman think they would? And O Mummy dear, don't go away and leave me all alone! My brave little son who had never before been the least bit afraid of going to sleep in the dark!

How wrong it is to horrify a child! All that you say and every story that you tell should be deliberately intended to give confidence, the certainty of man's power over material, and the happiness of spiritual safety in a Heavenly Father's care.

Soon after this unfortunate incident I had another bad experience with Michael, of the same sort, one afternoon when he was busy and happy "making a rockery" with his dear little slow-worm basking in the sun beside him. It has been a tradition in this garden to love slow-worms; Betty also, as a little girl, had one for a pet. Well, it so happened that a friend looked in, an old friend of whom I am extremely fond. In the matter of Franciscan affection for all God's creatures she does not quite see eye to eye with us—but she saw the slow-worm. And the shape of it seemed to bring back to her mind every story connected with snakes and adders that she had ever heard. Meaning so kindly, I am sure, she tried her best to frighten Michael, and was at length with the greatest difficulty removed to another part of the garden. How differently it is possible to regard these things! To me it appeared a case of saving

my boy from a horrible contagion. To her it doubtless seemed a solemn duty to warn the child of what might possibly happen to him supposing that he ever went to India. But then, as I remonstrated, supposing he never did go to India! why should he have a terror all his childhood of what some poisonous reptile in some far off country might possibly do, instead of enjoying life in his own peaceful garden, with his own dear little slow-worm happily sleeping on the bank beside him?

Fortunately there is a little girl of three years old in our "Good Night Stories" who shared her bread and milk each morning with a viper, and Michael's peace of mind was soon restored by the reading of that, and the 28th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles about the courteous barbarians who kindled a fire for St. Paul when he was ship-wrecked, and were horrified to see a viper come out of the heat and fasten on his hand. Of course he knew that Our Lord had said His followers should take up serpents, and if they drank any deadly thing it would not hurt them; but the barbarians supposed he was going to swell up and suddenly fall down and die. And they expected long, but seeing that there came no harm to him, they changed their minds and thought he must be a god.

You are much happier if you can feel at one with all God's creatures. The Puritans hated bear-baiting, according to Macaulay, "not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectators." And in all cruelty, greater than the injury to the animal, is the injury to the mind of man.

Remembering this you can easily share your jam, when you are having tea in the garden in August, with your little Brother Wasp. In the remote event of a sting, that

Where the buttercups so sweet
Dust with gold my naked feet,
Where the grass grows green and long,
Sit I here and sing my song.

But no City, great or small
Have I ever seen at all.

ROBERT BUCHANAN.

old fashioned habit of flying for a blue-bag will still be found the most amusing and effectual remedy. First you and Michael run off hand in hand to the wash-house to find it, then you wet it and dab it on the place and admire the beautiful colour of the streams of blue; and all the pain, certainly all possible chance of further swelling and irritation, is gone before you return to the tea-table to laugh at the wasp for having made his "Thank you" such a very pointed remark!

"At first you walked about and were so nice, dear little Brother," says Michael, "but Oh, when you sat down!"

Let every accident if possible appear to be funny, because a child will not cry if it laughs. And another thing, in an emergency, is to be—like St. Paul's barbarians—polite. Listen to what the child has got to say, and do not hurry it. When it is frightened, over-tired or irritable make the process of going to bed especially easy, and let your words and manner suggest that everything is quite all right. At such times the mother's calm and loving attitude of mind is essentially a shaping force.

On occasions of cuts and bruises, I think that a reasonable sympathy, cold water, and a bandage, will sufficiently meet the case; and a child, with the example of its parents' courage always before it, can gradually be trained to bear pain bravely. To the thought of pain, bravely borne for the sake of others, your son should early be accustomed, and stories of heroes in the days gone by—told with the stress laid on the courage not on the cruelty—will be a help. (The terrible details of martydom I would not tell of for some years to come). But the idea of ill-health, which is quite a different matter, should never be allowed a place in the mind at all.

In cases of slight illness do not be nervous and do not at once send for a doctor; unless, of course, high temperature suggests to you a real necessity. I think it is wiser for a mother, under nearly all circumstances, gently and kindly to render first aid herself. Anxiety only increases your child's complaint. You do not know how much the little one's mind acts on its body, nor how much your own mind will act upon the mind of your child.

And please do not give nasty medicines, with threats and fuss and tears, and a tremendous commotion when there are symptons of some slight indisposition. It is far more satisfactory to provide a simple remedy; an apple, an orange, a banana, a spoonful of honey, or some bottle of mixture in which you and your mother before you have always believed, and to say sincerely to the child; "Five drops of this in a cup of water will make you sleep, and to-morrow morning you will wake up much better." The child then takes it happily and hopefully, falls off to sleep whilst you are singing a lullaby—and wakes up well. At least that is how I have always acted with my children, and it has been invariably successful.

This subject of minor ailments is not unimportant. Three great realities are the will, the imagination, and the intellect; and we see on all sides how nervousness about health goes far to weaken the will and destroy the power of the intellect. A mind pre-occupied with draughts, perpetually bothering as to whether the window should be open or the door should be shut, is incapable of doing good work of any sort. You must get free from the tyranny of material conditions before you are able to attend to, much less remedy, the affairs of others. It is not so much a question of not worrying, as of so adjusting the mind that

worry is demonstrated to be an illusion.

As to doubts—in our little home we have no room for doubt; only a Martha-room for work and a Mary-room for rest; no passages, and a few beautiful pictures which provide broad channels along which the thoughts flow easily. We aim at the quality of repose, to have comfortable minds, to be sure of something; for this tends towards peace.

Some years ago I prepared a little dressing-book for Betty so that she might arrange her mind each morning whilst she was putting on her clothes. It think it is a great thing to have seven firmly fixed ideas before you are seven years old: These were the first bricks with which I endeavoured to build a mansion for her soul:—

1. It is a noble thing to work and to work hard.
2. A state of poverty is the happiest state of life, because God will send us all that we really need.
3. We must always be ready to give our best to others, because for us everyone represents the Christ, and what we give to anyone we really give to Him.
4. Life lived thus is perfectly delightful.
5. The sky, the trees, the river, the birds, the whole of this beautiful, wonderful world gives us great joy.
6. We live in the Ocean of Divine Love as the fishes live in the sea.
7. If we have any troubles or difficulties we need only take them to God in prayer, and He will soon make everything all right.

Please be the mother of your child's mind, not only the mother of its body. A young brain, of all receptacles, is not the thing to be filled by chance, and education, though sometimes defined as "bringing out what is there," would be better considered as a matter of putting in that which we wish to find there. When you go away from home for a few days holiday, and you pick up a sheet of writing paper in the hotel where you are stopping, you do not say this is a good letter, or this is a bad letter. You think over your impressions of the place, decide how you are going to describe it, and make the letter exactly what you intend it to be. Personally I think of a child's mind as a white sheet of paper; but if you do not care about that, it is just as true—probably more true—to think of it as containing everything potentially : art, music, literature, simplicity, kindness, courage; all waiting to be called forth. It is for you to make the appeal, during these early years, and the child responds. Lay up a store of pleasant associations at the back of the mind before it is three, and this good foundation of sub-conscious thought will rule the after life. Aim at establishing right habits of thought. The effects of persistent right-thinking would appear to be miracles to those who have never practised the control and the choice of thoughts.

Everybody knows that it is foolish to leave a newly-dug flower border to take its chance; if it is not quickly filled with flowers it will fill itself with weeds. And there is an old saying that three years weeds make thirty years weeding.

I once knew a lady who before going abroad for a couple of years handed over her house to a care-taker, saying, in the interests of what she considered to be

economy : "It will not be necessary to have any work done in the garden whilst I am away." So for nearly three years—she was away longer than she had anticipated—thistles, nettles, docks, dandelions, and groundsel grew at their own wild will. On her return, she at once engaged a gardener, and was extremely annoyed to find that he could not get the place in order. No sooner were the paths and borders tidied up than weeds appeared again. She grew to dislike him very much, and said he was a bad gardener. He grew to dislike her still more, and thought she was a bad economist.

It is equally false economy for a mother to attempt to spare herself any trouble during the nursery days of her young family. Heaven lies about us in our infancy, and it is her duty to see that it remains there. I think her chief solicitude should be to preserve "a happy stillness of the mind."

To fill Michael's mind with lovely thoughts, and to form his taste for the best kind of Art, I collected, whilst he was still in his cradle, reproductions of all the most beautiful pictures in the galleries abroad, remembering how when Goethe was endeavouring to teach his young friend Eckermann to see, he began by showing him none but the choicest engravings of great masterpieces. "Thus alone can taste be acquired," he said, "after which you are fit to deal with the second best, neither over nor under-rating it. But there must be a standard of reference to start with." At two years old Michael kept all his pictures in a large cardboard box, and sorted them out on the nursery table on wet afternoons; placing them in lines and packets and choosing out his favourites to be put on the mantel-piece.

A collection of loose cards and photographs will be found more satisfactory than a scrap-book when the child is very young; it engrosses the attention and occupies the mind longer. And in bad weather instead of fidgetting about not knowing what to do, it is such a comfort to have the child well-ordered in all its faculties, recollected, peaceful, mirthful. Also I feel certain that in after life there must be a love for those pictures which were associated with the happy nursery days.

Later on comes the time for cutting out and pasting into home-made, brown paper books—the child still perfectly happy, concentrating on lovely things. A very delightful scrap-book of all the pictures connected with the life of St. Francis of Assisi may easily be collected and made in this way. And how a child loves a book which has been made on purpose for him! a get-at-able book, a book for daily use, a book to hug, to carry out in the perambulator, to drop in the road, to lose in the garden; a book made over and over again as the years go by, with pictures which he has been allowed to colour with his own paints, and with funny little odds and ends which from time to time he has added on his own account—pasting them in rather crooked, very likely, though his Mummy did not say so, knowing that that was not one of the things which matter; a book which he feels is his very own possession and proudly calls "*My* book—*my* book, with *my* pictures and *my* songs."

Our Michael has the unusual advantage of a Daddy who can set to music the little verses which his Mummy makes for him, and which his elder sister quickly and cleverly illustrates.

But even if in your own particular home everything

cannot be produced on the premises, you will find that your friends—the people who *do* understand what your system of education really is—will be most glad to help you. Nice people are simply thankful to know of a house where everything good and beautiful will be welcomed and appreciated.

On fine days out of doors. it is of course even easier to point out and admire all the beautiful big and little works of God; and the child must have a garden of its own, in which to sow and plant and weed, and look for each opening flower. If one does not begin to love gardening young I do not think the real spirit and joy of it can be acquired in after life. I once knew a rich old lady who had lost her only son, and finding life in the world without him a miserable blank, was advised to turn to her garden for the rest and change of thought which she so greatly needed. Industriously all one long, hot afternoon she stooped (although she was by no means fond of stooping) and "weeded" a long flower-border; and when the gardener came to have a look at it he said, "Yes, Ma'am, I see you *have* been busy. You have taken out every one of those young antirrhinums I put in yesterday!" So she felt sadder than ever, and hopeless about knowing the difference between one green leaf and another, and gave up gardening in despair. In contrast to this I must just say that Michael, now aged four-and-a-half, can weed any border, filled with anything, and never makes a mistake.

To carefully brought-up little children everything is easy and entrancing. They love to have the wonders of natural history explained to them, and a loving father and mother will know how to do this suitably and sufficiently. To a child there is no difficulty but dulness. Information

concerning the mysteries of life should be given reverently at such a very early age that it sinks into the child's mind and finds its natural place amongst the other unfolding wonders of creation. The desire for explanations being thus forestalled, curiosity is not aroused and absolute confidence in the father and mother—the most important thing of all—is absolutely established.

From them the child must also learn that the human spirit has power to control the animal nature. "The Strategy of the Holy War" cannot be commenced too soon, —self-denial at table, practised perhaps at first only on Fridays, will serve to emphasize the idea.

I love the story of Rosmini's mother, who early taught her little son to restrain his desires, and to gain that perfect mastery over himself which fits man for great undertakings. Before supper she would gather her children round the table spread with many delicacies—fruits, sweets, and other good things—and, telling them stories from the Gospel, would dwell on the privations and sufferings endured by our dear Lord to atone for our sinful gratifications; upon which the little ones, touched by her words, would of their own accord take the plainest food for their meal, and leave the delicacies displayed before them for others.

Then there is drill, musical drill, which greatly helps to get the physical nature under control, and the revived Ancient Dances, amongst which the Pavane takes the first place. Grave, solemn, haughty, it was the favourite dance of the 16th Century, distinguished by the rhythmic grace and leisured gestures of those stately days—the peacock dance in which kings, princes and ladies of high degree took part. Singing accompanied the dancing then, and

should do so now. "Dancing to singing is a thing of great state and pleasure," wrote Roger Bacon in the 13th Century, and I expect he knew—not so much because he taught at the University of Oxford, as because no one has ever been able to improve upon his "four grounds for human ignorance.'

So let your children dance and sing, and if you want the right tune for the Pavane, Arbeau, that wonderful monk who left us his book on dancing, has handed down "Belle qui tiens ma vie,' which immediately strikes one as being exactly what a Religious who appreciated the beauty of ceremonial dancing *would* choose. Written in G. Minor, it gives you the impression of a solemn, uncompromising succession of common chords, finally resolving —quite suddenly and unexpectedly—in the Major. And there you are! Make a tremendous effort to do the right thing whilst you are passing through this world, it seems to say, live a life of intense and beautiful restraint; and then—even if an under-current of suffering accompanies you to the end, the end does come—quite suddenly and unexpectedly, and you find yourself in Heaven!

I have much faith in the benefits to be derived from rhythmic movement; a child enjoys thinking of its body as a little kingdom to be ruled—an immense number of atoms which would get out of order and become very troublesome if they were not wisely governed. James Graham, Marquis of Montrose expressed this most charmingly, about two hundred years ago in his "Excellent New Ballad,"

> "I pray
> That little world of thee
> Be governed by no other sway
> But purest monarchy."

and much the same idea, I fancy, was in Thomas Campion's mind when he wrote :

> Like a little world of bliss :
> Beauty, beauty guards thy looks.

The choice of poetry with which to store your child's mind is a very important point. If he only learns beautiful words, he is more likely to think only of beautiful things. Verses may be learned, long before they can be understood, and a tone given to the mind which could not be acquired in any other way. Such recitations also form a background by which friends afterwards will remember the child.

Do begin with Wordsworth's great Sonnets, for though this sounds rather ambitious, I speak as one who knows : Betty loved the sound of them at five years old, and she both loved and understood them at ten. Then there are beautiful things like Nora Chesson's "Blackbird," Chesterton's "Donkey," Katherine Tynan's "Sheep and Lambs," and Alice Meynell's "Shepherdess of Sheep." If you at once set out to make your own manuscript anthology of poems for the nursery you will find it an easy and delightful task. There is so much beauty all round one simply waiting to be found. And the same thing applies to drama. Amongst the available material there are to be found such charming little French and English plays. And I do not think a child should be able to remember the time when it did not act.

In early life the dramatic instinct is so strong, we find that all the children who come and play with us are ready at a moment's notice to dress up and act—indoors or out of doors, the latter for choice, because we have a spot which looks as if it had been made on purpose for an out-

The happy children ankle-deep
And laughing as they wade.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

door theatre in our glen. Suitable little plays can be obtained, or better still made up by the actors themselves, as they go along, taking for the foundation some story or scene from history which they all know and like.

And by way of guiding their taste please never look at, read or say yourself anything which is not nice. Live as you wish your children to live, and then all will be well.

Metaphorically it is the child itself who should take charge of THE KEY OF THE NURSERY DOOR, and no one must be allowed to cross that threshold who does not understand the importance of desirable impressions being constantly received by the young brain. Ladies like Mrs. Mottled-Umber (the personification of insignificance on the moth-page of our natural history book) are not admitted. The lack of evil intent is not sufficient qualification. Intense nobility of mind, enthusiasm for humanity, white hot purity—even the possessors of these take off their shoes before they dare to stand upon that holy ground.

Long before little children can exercise any judgment of their own, their minds and hearts and consciences are being influenced by everything that is going on around them. In later life indeed they may have no conscious memory of the early environment—or only a very hazy recollection—but undoubtedly they will be immensely influenced ever afterwards by those first impressions which the senses received.

A word or two as you kiss your baby "goodnight," sinks in and leaves a permanent impression. Although the child cannot understand, it remembers, and has something worth understanding stored in its mind. I do not believe in too much pleasure, certainly not in much

excitement, as a good send-off into the land of By-bye. A child more easily finds rest with the knowledge of having pleased you, or of having made some one happy, or with the plan of some little kindness to be done for somebody on the morrow.

By the end of a long day you may be tired, very, very tired, but you are also brave, and, knowing yourself to be the channel of Divine Love, you will not fail to arrange for your darling to sleep in peace.

One of my earliest recollections is of my own dear mother bending over me to say "God bless you," her ruby and diamond brooch shining out from the bosom of her black dinner dress.

O Mothers! these are the jewelled, golden moments which will never come again.

Early influences remain all powerful for good. All that we do, and are, depends to a great extent on the impressions which we unconsciously receive. Noble women have in all ages influenced the rising generation by their unselfish devotion. Some day people will ask of your child what antecedents and what experiences have helped to form so distinguished a character? They will want to know what were the circumstances and early surroundings amidst which its spiritual and intellectual powers were formed. You have the chance now to make your choice between the finite and the infinite; and (however tired you are) I know how you will choose.

> Kings may have wonderful jewels to bring,
> Mother has only a kiss for her king!
>
> ALFRED NOYES.

> Then, skilled in mysteries of night,
> With tender visions of delight
> She wreathed his nesting place.
>
> JOHN BANNISTER TABB.

BUTTONS AND BLACK-LEAD BRUSHES

Uprises there
A mother's form upon my ken,
Guiding my infant steps.

THOMAS HARDY.

Only believe that the good is true.
Why, it is all there is to do.

JAMES RHOADES.

By the hand of a child I am led to the throne of the King.

GEORGE WILLIAM RUSSELL.

BUTTONS AND BLACK-LEAD BRUSHES

IF you resolve to live strictly according to the highest common sense during the next twenty-four hours, that is a resolution hard to beat. An ambition which survives and flourishes on the top of common sense daily living, is admitted to be an invincible ambition. But lest perhaps by common sense everyone does not mean quite the same thing let me explain that when I say it I mean a sixth sense held in common by the whole human race, and it just amounts to this—the sense to live well.

Now to live well one must have some notion of obedience and a love of work. (I am not speaking to the people who only give orders and have everything done for them. There are fewer of that sort loose in the world, I fancy, than there used to be before the war, and a good thing too).

It was the spirit of disobedience which originally set the nerves of humanity ajar, and it is that which still makes harmony impossible alike in the world and in the family. How often one hears a woman say "Had I been Eve I would never have touched that wretched apple." Yet there are still forbidden fruits for her to practice on. The mothers of the present day have plenty of opportunities to

prove themselves superior to poor Eve. The habit of instantly giving way to the expressed wishes of the Master of the House is one which children are quick to notice and imitate. Obedience is very infectious, and a mother can give the key note of contentment to the whole household by her unfailing loyalty to her husband's commands. All the same I think it is a good plan sometimes to admit quite frankly to your children that you do not want to do some particular thing, but you are doing it because Father said he wished it to be done. The absolute distinction between the will and the feelings should be explained to the child and emphasized and illustrated in very possible way. And it should be clearly understood that it is by patience not by disobedience that you get what you want. "The Queen Patience," St. Catherine of Sienna, used to call this virtue, and St. Teresa went so far as to say "Patience obtains everything." So let us learn to wait till apples are ready instead of trying to grab.

Three things which little children must inevitably be taught are self-restraint, obedience and independence. You remember Mrs. Ewing's Willow-Man who grew upon his hoary head a crop of Mistletoe; and how the Dame who cut it said—it was her whim—"A merry Christmas to you, Sir!" and left a bit for him; and how her grandchildren, in spite of her warning to treat him civilly, and leave a bit behind, took all and said "Who cares?" . . . . and found none growing there when they came back the following year!

It has a lovely Moral:

> "Oh, children, who gather the spoils of wood and wold,
> From selfish greed and wilful waste your little hands withhold.
> Though fair things be common, this moral bear in mind:—
> Pick thankfully and modestly, and leave a bit behind."

"Leave some for the Naiads and the Dryads" was a favourite phrase with Mr. Alfred Gatty—not merely the charge of an imaginary mother in Aunt Judy's magazine to her "blue-eyed banditti;" but a mystic warning with force to fetter the same fingers in later life with all the powers of a pious tradition.

It is because of the Willow-Man and the Naiads and the Dryads that I hand Michael the sugar basin, begging him to help himself and leave a bit for Daddy.

And in the same spirit he is allowed to turn the water taps—*not quite full on.* So much for self-restraint.

Independence will be worked out by an active-minded, high-spirited little boy in various ways. Michael first tried it with a chopper; and in the case of choppers a mother's anxiety is considerably lessened by the knowledge that it is small and light and rather blunt. Michael has one of that sort. He sets about his chopping in a most business-like manner with a bundle of sticks on one side of him and a box to be filled with fire-wood on the other; sitting in front of the large block just as he has seen some poor man do—some man out of work and none too fond of it, yet determined to earn the eightpence we have promised him to pay for his bed at the lodging-house.

As a rule Michael accomplishes his self-allotted task without any accident, but I think I must tell you how once when his instep got cut, and he was not quite certain whether to cry at the sight of blood, and I said, to distract his attention, "O darling! that is just the very place where the nail went through our dear Lord's foot" he exclaimed "How lovely! how lovely!" looking at it in an ecstacy of delight. There in beauty blowing bloomed the Rose of Love. I had a little while before been reading him

D. M. Ross's SONG OF JESUS. How "with little clamour, simply robed and shod, he with saw and hammer built a bridge to God."

After that day I felt that Michael must be allowed a free hand to build his bridge . . . . .

Obedience may be learnt in many ways. Personally I acquired the spirit of it with the dying flicker of a blown-out candle. There was neither gas nor electric light in my old home when I was a child. If a light was needed one had a candle, and when it was no longer required, in the interests of economy, one blew it out. And my father particularly enjoined us never to leave a room as long as there was a spark left on the candle. I don't know why. He never explained the reason. Something to do with the candle coming to life again, and burning down in its socket, and a gust of wind blowing a muslin curtain that way, and a blaze and a house on fire, I vaguely imagined. I had once been wakened up and rescued by firemen in shining helmets when I was staying in a house where the nurse went down to her supper leaving the baby asleep and a lighted candle beside a muslin curtain in a draught. But it was to please him whilst he lived, and to be near the memory of his dear particular injunction after he had passed away—not the least for fear of the house getting on fire—that I have stood waiting more five minutes at a time than I could count, watching that spark die out and thinking of the beloved spirit that had fled. *Et lux perpetua luceat ei.*

In Betty's case, obedience could not be practised in the same way, because we used gas—and if you blow out gas and wait—wait long enough—I don't know what might happen! So she began with buttons, spread out on a

How with little clamour,
Simply robed and shod,
He with saw and hammer
Built a bridge to God.

D. M. Ross.

table, buttons of every sort and size and colour.

I had inherited a drawer full, handed down from a great great grandmother, who when she gave away her children's worn-out clothes always cut off the buttons in case they might come in useful again. It does not seem to have struck her that the poor woman to whom she gave the clothes had the expense of buying more *and* the trouble of sewing them on. It always seemed to me that it would have been better for the rich old lady to have bought buttons herself, if *someone* had to buy them; but evidently she thought otherwise, as her collection testified. It also shouted the answer to the question whether she ever *did* find she needed them.

I rather like to imagine that she collected them for Betty. Anyhow Betty made daily use of them, emptying them all out on the table, and choosing the ones which she liked best.

"Please may I have this? Please may I have that?" She used to say. And I sat beside her answering: "No, darling. No, darling. No, darling. Yes, darling;" something after the fashion of your little pet dog with the sugar on his nose, and your "Trust, trust, trust, trust,—paid for!" You know the game, and of course the object was to learn to ask permission, which is very easy when once the habit has been strongly formed; and the reason for using buttons, instead of something eatable—sugar for instance—is that, in the case of a baby-child, it does not really care so very much whether it has, for its side of the table, the large brown bone button with the four holes, or the little white mother-of-pearl button with a shank at the back and no holes at all.

My great idea in education is that you should form

correct habits before you raise difficulties.

If possible avoid a scene. Avoid establishing an unpleasant precedent. You can go over the same ground again later on when tempers have calmed down. You can rehearse the performance half-a-dozen times to get it pat, showing exactly where the "Please" and "Thank you" ought to have been said, and how nice manners would have waited its turn; or how, to make some little stranger happy, a favourite plaything might have been yielded up. And all this without any fuss or annoyance or antagonism. And especially—as I have said before—especially be careful when a child is overtired or not quite well to let the environment be calm and fragrant and restful. A child's mind is so trustful, so innocent that I think it should be approached with reverence, and you ought always to be a little bit afraid lest you should jar such a delicate, exquisite, beautifully balanced piece of human machinery.

For instance it happened once upon a time that our Belgian refugee baby got hold of Betty's watch, and she, not realizing how a month's experience of bombs, in a cellar, had shattered its little nerves, rescued her property too suddenly. The baby screamed and would not be pacified. The mother comforted in vain. None of us felt that the return of the watch was quite the right way out of the difficulty, but not until the happy inspiration came to someone to begin playing with a notebook and a pencil (which she might have) did our poor little visitor stop crying.

"Hullo! What's this?" she seemed to be saying to herself in Flemish, "A note-book to scribble on! And a pencil to make marks with! That's the very thing for me! And if they won't let me have it, shan't I yell!" But she

might have it, that was just what it had been brought out for; and her relieved mother, after exclaiming "*Elle a changé d'idée*," chatted to her tiny daughter in the prettiest way, bidding her "*Ecris une petite lettre à maman.*"

That is only just one example. Of course if Betty had been more experienced she would have brought out the note-book before removing the watch. There is much art in turning one thought into another, and one requires great tact with a very young child. I do not believe in a direct refusal. "Can I have a knife to cut this pencil?" a child will ask. And you can reply, "Let me see the pencil. Yes, it is rather blunt, and it would be nicer with a good sharp point, wouldn't it? Let us find a knife. And, perhaps, as a knife is rather an awkward thing to use it will be better for me to cut the pencil for you." The child agrees, easily, thankfully, its mind having been led on gradually by the sympathy and interest shown towards its demand.

But there are children and children, and I must confess that I once took charge of a little boy who had just come back from India, and whose father declared that he gave him more trouble than a whole regiment of sepoys. He had not the slightest notion of obeying, and he was six years old; so in his case, as he was extremely fond of sugar, I began with that. I used to put a lump on the table, and tell him to fetch it and eat it,—very quickly at first, the two orders hurried into one, because if I was not very quick, such was his expedition, it could hardly have been called a lesson in obedience! How he loved that game! We repeated it many, many times, and then when he grew fond of me, and gave up trying to kick, we were

able to go on to the manners of a gentleman, and the bearing of a soldier, and he would march to the door and open it, and shut it at the word of command. I loved that naughty little boy, and rejoiced in the triumph of winning him over when so many governesses, nurses, under-nurses, and lady's maids had failed. If he kicked them hard enough they got ill and left, he told me in confidence. However, as he became a gallant British Officer and doubtless fought bravely for his country, perhaps those battles with his old inadequate superiors should be forgotten.

It rests very much with the people who have charge of a high-spirited child whether he be "naughty" or not. Do arrange that your children shall be good—useful and good. For though perhaps you might not think it, the matter is really so very much in your own hands. And you can form the habit of being pleased; I know, because I used to practise away so very hard at this in the days gone by —and Oh! the unusual opportunities my little daughter gave me! But it is a habit that anyone may acquire. If you make a point of always thanking the child for what it does, whether it really helps or not, you soon get to the stage when you can say quite easily, "Thank you so much, my darling, for putting all the silver forks and spoons in tidy rows under the kitchen table. They do look neat! and now we'll wipe them very clean, and put them back into the drawer again." In those days Betty used to be delighted to think that she had been able to help me, and nowadays I reap the benefit of her love of arrangement and order; the planning of store-cupboards, and the tidying of larder shelves following naturally on that early, rather inconvenient method of trying to keep that house in order.

It is really sweet of a child of two to get hold of the

black-lead brushes and try to polish up the grate; but only a mother who deliberately trains herself to see the motive rather than the action, can, when suddenly confronted by a black-leaded baby, shut her eyes to smuts and smudges, and express her gratitude for the little offer of help so kindly meant. Yet if you want your child to help you in after life you must never say it is "naughty" for trying to help you now—however disastrous the results may be. People are often surprised at Betty being already such an excellent cook, and "*petite femme de ménage.*" Well! that was my recipe.

A child loves praise, and as a rule it is very anxious to please you. So do be pleased. Let it choose its own work in the house or in the garden, and go at it with enthusiasm and tremendous energy, and stop when it is tired. Sometimes it will elect to wash the front door steps, or the kitchen floor, and sometimes by mistake it will upset a bucket of water over a polished floor and leave you to wipe it up. But you can bear the trouble, and the exasperating muddles, if you constantly remind yourself that the time may come when you will be only too thankful for such an active-minded, helpful little worker.

So do not worry if teaching your child to love work means for the present a good deal more work for you. All work may be accepted as a sacrament—a turning of matter in the order of God's Will. If you surrender to His Spirit of Love, and make all your actions acts of loving service, He will use you as His instrument and work through your material, so that all is done in perfect harmony. (I wonder if you know what I mean? It is rather difficult to put into words. The best way to understand it, is to do it—and then you know).

Concentration is, of course, the main thing; "Do what you do." As in painting, so in life, single-touch is the thing to aim at. Let your exterior life correspond to the interior; *mean* a thing—and do it. That keeps your character right. And if the mother's character is getting along all right, her child's character will not be far behind. You will both get into the way of taking all outward things and drawing them into the interior life, and your only desire in this world will be to do your work well—any work which comes to hand. You need not bother about what work you should do; the easy way to know is: either because you feel strongly inspired or because you are asked to do it. And should there ever seem to be a clash of the two calls at the same time, the safe rule is to give up your own plan and accept the wish of another. No, there are no difficulties. If you look straight to God, if you regard everyone as a brother or a sister in Christ, you need have no fear that in doing what is asked of you, you may be making a mistake. God is not like that. He does not deceive you when you trust Him. He simply loves you, and He showers His blessings upon you when you try to know, love and serve Him.

So with a daily content and dignity, offer up your own work and your child's work too; and when you are sometimes tempted to slap those busy little hands, kiss them instead, for the sake of One Who was obedient even unto the death of the Cross.

THE PRE-CONCEIVED IDEA

Baby see the flowers!
—Baby sees
Fairer things than these,
Fairer though they be than dreams of ours.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

A hundred butterflies saw I—
But not one like the child saw fly.

* * * *

My world this day has lovely been—
But not like what the child has seen.

WILLIAM HENRY DAVIES.

We only saw, where ways were rough
The flowers about our feet.

SIDNEY ROYSE LYSAGHT.

Childhood is health.

GEORGE HERBERT.

THE PRE-CONCEIVED IDEA

STANDING outside an Infant School in the slums, when lessons are done and crowds of laughing, shouting babies come streaming out, it is surprising to count how many of them wear glasses!

It is unnatural, also, to find a child of another class, beautifully starched and embroidered, in her own white nursery (a child still wheeled about in a perambulator, and dressed and undressed, at an age when her little sister of the slums would be mother's help, taking care of Tom, Dick and Harry and the baby) a child upon whom has been bestowed every possible, expensive, and elaborate toy—a child for whom you are given to understand nothing can be too good—disfigured by great gold-rimmed spectacles.

And most distressing of all to me, because perhaps it is brought still nearer home, are those lovely, large, brown, velvety, long-lashed windows of the soul, belonging to a little boy with curly hair and an angelic countenance who comes here every day at ten o'clock for lessons, to learn the mysteries of the three R's, if you please, in enormous goggles.

When enquired into, the explanation given in each case is the same: "Defective eyesight;" tempting the further

enquiry, "But have these children ever had a chance?"

Amongst some notes,—put aside years ago in consequence of other claims upon my time—I find "bright silver dishes and the newest wax;" but not as playthings for your children, only as symbols, according to wise old Roger Ascham, of the pure wit of a sweet young babe; the newest wax to receive the best and fairest printing; the brightest of silver dishes to keep clean any good thing that you may put in it.

Another note concerns a young Sicilian girl, a mere child, who saw with the eyes of faith during her time of trial on earth, and who now, with the pure in heart sees God. In art she is usually represented carrying two eyes on a dish. She offers them to you—true vision, dearly bought and freely given. She was a good friend to her own mother on that tedious journey from Syracuse to Catania, full of courage and hope; and I suggest that if you invite her to your nursery, Saint Lucy will prove a good friend to you, too. This is what those eyes upon a dish would say: "What is some good is seeing; seeing practically, definitely, vitally—by means of an acquired habit of soul, a trained interior disposition. History is nothing else than a picture of God's glory amidst human vicissitudes; of divine action amidst the agitation of human affairs." Saint Lucy obtains for us a practical insight into the perpetual struggle between our own satisfaction and God's glory; she helps us to conquer the habit of seeing everything from the point of view of our own pleasure.

Another picture of her, companion and complement to the heroic lady of the eyes, might set forth the human side of her entrancing story; and it would not come amiss, I

fancy, to some of the weaker brethren. Picture this child, after the fatigues of unwonted travel, still resolved, with a love beyond her strength, to spend the whole night at Saint Agatha's tomb, praying for her mother's cure. Picture the ailing mother and the ardent little daughter praying, praying, till at length, overcome by utter weariness, both fall asleep. "Could you not watch with me another hour?" the suffering traveller might have asked, and the answer would have come tenderly, sweetly ,but positively, "No, I cannot." Little Lucy was too tired. From a material standpoint the pilgrimage might now seem to have proved a failure. It is the saints who understand these things. Hence, in a vision there appeared the martyred Agatha, calling her "Sister," foretelling her mother's recovery and the child's own death. It *was* the hour of victory after all. The cure was effected. And the lady, in thanksgiving, allowed her daughter to fulfil the two desires of her heart; to distribute her wealth amongst the poor, and to consecrate her virginity to God.

The connection between Saint Lucy's offering and old Roger Ascham's wax and shining silver will be presently explained.

Anyone can buy a pair of spectacles. Anyone can salve an easy conscience by saying, "I have consulted a good oculist." It is far more trouble to choose, and point out, and explain those objects which you desire to call to the mind's eye, to be yourself the spectacles through which your child's awakening perceptions can focus the world.

Visits to a *better* oculist, I maintain, are absolutely essential; and not only daily, but nightly, hourly. Fall asleep over it, dear weary mother, if you must. Why not? So did the little oculist herself; and she will know, just

as Saint Agatha knew, how to bring heavenly help to bear on the subconscious mind.

He was a clever man, highly thought of in the profession, who provided me with eye-glasses when I was a girl, assuring my mother that without them I could never see correctly. But hers was the wisdom which successfully referred the matter to a higher court.

Of course objections were raised. Be prepared for that. Every attempt will probably be made to shake her client's trust in her good offices. She is at once too young, they tell you, and too old, old-fashioned, out-of-date, adapted only to the superstitions of the times gone by. Old enough, you must answer, at the time of her martyrdom to know how to obtain a sight of God; and living now where there is no yesterday and no to-morrow in the Science of the Saints.

Standing outside an Infant School, and noticing how many of the children come out wearing spectacles, I say to myself: "There go I, but for a mother who made a novena to Saint Lucy."

And as of course every mother wants her children to have good eyes, give yours a chance to see. Arrange an environment in which it is possible for them to look at the right things; a nursery window from which can be admired the daffodils and lambs and apple blossoms; nursery walls, distempered and hung with a few, beautiful pictures, changed and re-arranged to suit the feasts and seasons of the year. A child's mind is a mirror always ready to reflect beauty. Be careful that it is not asked to look at anything which cannot be regarded with admiration, reverence and love. That is the secret of correct vision. That is the right kind of sight.

More than once, experience has proved that some little scholar of whom an oculist despaired—a child to whose mind the eyes entirely failed to convey the meaning of the printed page—could read the constellations of the hedge-row, and count the terminal umbels of wild chervil, turning with interest from the "Kecksies" of a nurse-maid, to the mother's Greek name signifying "pleasant leaf"—a leaf pointed out as twice pinnate, deeply lobed, and cut and hairy.

You see in fact what you have been taught to see. That is my theory, the theory of the pre-conceived idea. A child sees just exactly what it has in its mind. Concede so much, and oh! what safety is ensured for the impressions received during excursions into other environments, other establishments less carefully guarded than your own. In a strange house even a shy child has a tendency to find and recognise and remark on some familiar object—a picture of the Good Shepherd or the Holy Family—perhaps the only one good, beautiful object in the room.

"Oh! I'm so glad to see you've got my dear picture of the Angel Guardian," once exclaimed a little girl who had gone to spend the day with some unusually worldly-minded friends. The picture was hanging rather low down on the wall behind the boot-cupboard, and the child of the house was surprised that it should have attracted the attention of her little guest.

"Auntie Mary gave it to me years ago," she said, by way of apology, "Do you like it?"

"Oh I *love* it!" replied the visitor. The hostess became interested, and stooping down beside her little friend, began to study it carefully for the first time.

"Yes, it is rather nice," she remarked, after a close

examination.

"I have my Angel over my bed," said the visitor.

"Do you? I never thought of that."

"I wish you'd have yours over your bed, instead of that silly picture of the dressed-up cats."

"I think I will. That's quite a good idea."

So the cats and the Angel changed places, and when I last heard of them those pussies were getting on quite nicely in their dark corner behind the boot-cupboard (their owner pretended they were catching mice), and Auntie Mary, when she next came to stay, was glad to see her picture of the Angel Guardian watching over her sleeping niece, as she had always intended that it should.

And talking of pictures, in every town, in every country nowadays, the question arises : how often shall the children go to the cinema?—the pictures that dazzle. According to circumstances their parents will be able to judge of that, but whatever their decision may be, Catholics will remember that there are fourteen others on the walls of the church. And they will make sure that their children never forget all that God arranged, and all that Christ suffered, to provide those pictures called "The Stations of the Cross."

It is only in Church that we can hope to find the remedy for this world's ills. We are apt to get so confused and our minds so dissipated, standing, as it were, in a shop filled with mirrors, and bad mirrors at that, our own forms multiplied and distorted on every side. Oh ! the relief when at last we turn into a church and some one holds up the remedy—a small, gold-framed rose-window, saying : "Look through this to the Heart of the perfect Flower of all Mankind." After refreshing our eyes with the sight of the Blessed Sacrament everything else falls into its

Ah, sweet! ah, little one! so like a carven saint,
With your unflinching eyes, unflinching face,
Like a small angel, carved in a high place,
Watching unmoved across a gabled Town.

FORD MADOX HUEFFER.

proper place.

Children can easily be made to understand that there is a sort of veil over their eyes, so that they cannot see anything really properly yet. Say to them: "When you die you will see Jesus, and the more you look at the Blessed Sacrament while you have got that veil over your eyes, the more delight you will feel in seeing His dear Face when the veil has gone. Won't that be lovely? Often look at the Blessed Sacrament now, to keep your own face nice."

In the very simplest things we do not always see what is really there. For instance, have you ever noticed the dark shadows of the flowers against the wall, at Benediction? When the light is very bright the flowers themselves do not show at all, being exactly the same tone and colour as the background. If you did not know for certain you would say that the shadow was the real thing and that there were not any flowers in the vases at all.

Good Catholics never miss Benediction, if they can help it. It is the great opportunity for looking up. The disciples at the time of the ascension lost sight of their Divine Master in the clouds, but still looked up. A child soon learns, from the parents' example, to keep still, with steadfast and adoring eyes, breathing quite evenly, and waiting for the Blessing. And they are so much happier for having faith in a Power greater than themselves.

"One's eyes on God; one's feet on the ground." That is the best attitude for human beings to adopt. It was Saint Augustine, I think, who said: "As for me, I have only to fasten my eyes on God and His Will; God undertakes to look after my progress and advancement."

There is a beautiful picture, in the Cathedral at Antwerp, of the three day's loss; Saint Joseph is asking

everybody if they have seen Our Lord. Our Blessed Lady, with her hands clasped and her eyes raised, simply prays that He may be found. When we lose anything it is good to ask for help; but the best way to find it, is to pray. And we are all in danger of losing our way to Heaven. Henry Vaughan said: "And make dust see the way to immortality." I am so fond of that.

With regard to outdoor life, teach your children to notice flowers and trees and to listen to the songs of birds. Out walking you see what you look for; the man who is keen on cutting straight walking sticks, finds them in every hedge; while a boy who only looks for birds' nests will find only birds' nests in the same hedges. Some little encouragement, perhaps, in the form of a prize for nature-notes will give the necessary impetus to start the desired train of thought. Once started, children delight to discover the repetition in nature; the stripes on the tiger's coat, and the bars on the silver birch; the eye in the butterfly's wing, and the eye on the peacock's tail. A cow in a farm shed, at Christmas time, leads to a conversation on the stable at Bethlehem. A flock of sheep in a meadow reminds one of the shepherds and the angels' song. In this way well-trained vision will bring continual food for meditation to the receptive mind. And another great point to remember is: pure eyes do not see faults.

Of course it requires supernatural courage to find beauty everywhere. In a world like this the cynic and the materialist have no difficulty in seeing stupidity and ugliness. For instance any Western child can ridicule the Indian idol with ten hands and an elephant's head; it requires a holy Eastern teacher to explain that the wisdom of God is emphasized by the enormous head, and that the

ten hands signify all that His Majesty can do. I learned this only lately—and I must admit I felt ashamed of myself.

The habit of always looking beyond appearances to some lovely hidden meaning is not an easy habit to acquire.

Richenda Gurney of Earlham (Mrs. Cunningham) when asked in her old age how she managed never to see any evil or wrong in anybody, replied: "By keeping one eye tight shut, and the other only open a little way."

Some day your children will get nearer the truth than you are. For the present with regard to eye-sight in your nursery let there by a system of give and take; take your children to be Roger Ascham's silver dishes, and think of yourself as my friend St. Lucy giving them calm, charitable, comprehending eyes.

THE TOP OF YOUR HEAD

So fair a fancy few would weave
In these years! Yet, I feel,
If some one said on Christmas Eve,
'Come; see the oxen kneel

In the lonely barton by yonder coomb
Our childhood used to know,'
I should go with him in the gloom,
Hoping it might be so.

THOMAS HARDY.

The fry of children young . . . to sounding timbrels sung . . .
And made delightful music all the way.

EDMUND SPENCER.

Laughing delightfully;
I cannot hear a word of what they say:
Just a clean noise of youth.

GEOFFREY WINTHROP YOUNG.

THE TOP OF YOUR HEAD

NOW we come to Thankfulness and Hope, which may, I think, be regarded as different aspects of the same quality; the present and future tense of a happy attitude of mind. Cynics say that gratitude implies a lively sense of favours to come, let me rather declare that the habit of thanking God for what you already have, disposes your mind to hope for what you may yet receive. With the spirit of thankfulness and a proper sense of the duty of hope, a child will not be badly equipped for the battle of finding life pleasant.

Any mother, even if she is too brave to admit it in words, cannot help knowing that there are times when ordinary daily life seems desperately unpleasant. Yet the difficulty, analysed, will generally prove that unpleasantness lies, not so much in the present quiet half hour of which you are actually possessed, as in the dreaded awful moment which you imagine is just about to come.

Truly, faith is said to be the basis of life, and charity its crown; but hope is its everyday need. And where hope has not been steadily and consistently cultivated, dread—an un-reasoning, nervous horror of what may happen—creeps in and takes its place. Why you must hope, I think,

is because if you do not you will despair. The human mind seems to be so constituted that it must go out to meet the future one way or another.

But, perhaps you ask, how on earth can you, under all circumstances, firmly and easily hope for the very best? And the answer is: You can't. Yet even if you can't, I want you to believe that your child both can and will, if you face the subject boldly, realize its importance, and pave the way to the future with a spirit of ready gratitude. A child who has been trained, ever since it can remember, to keep on thanking God—to notice all the happy things of the day and to recognize the source from which they come—will naturally suppose that the dear, kind Heavenly Father Who sent all that was necessary and delightful yesterday and to-day, will do as much for it on the morrow.

There is more elasticity about one's outlook in very early life. One is less hampered by "facts." At two and a half years of age Betty would run to the window every morning in all weathers and exclaim, "Such a *lovely* day!" and I used to think, as I shivered over the fire, that if anything could improve Ludlow's autumn weather, this happy optimist would do so. We grown-ups are too apt to forget that only part of what we perceive comes through the senses from the object before us; another part, (and it may be the larger part) comes out of our own minds. To genius this can be such a joyous world! And I promise you if you have an infinite capacity for taking pains, your child will have the faculty of perceiving in an unusual way.

Start by being convinced that nothing you can think of, or desire, equals what Almightly God has arranged, and is arranging for you—if you only understood. You must not say you do not understand. Saint Augustine

of Hippo, who tried as it were to put all the waters of the ocean into a child's bucket—and failed—you remember the picture? St. Augustine, with his vast intellect summed up these difficulties by saying: "One must believe to understand; then understand to believe"—

That would seem to be the only way.

A friend of Spurgeon tells me that he admitted he got all his best ideas from those old Fathers of the Church. "Thank God for the starlight," he used to say, "and He will give you moonlight, thank Him for the moonlight and He will give you sunlight, thank Him for sunlight, and He will give you His own Light, which is the best Light of all."

Frances Ridley Havergal, wise woman, kept a diary of mercies, and I cannot help thinking how beneficial it would be for all of us to sit down each evening and deliberately think out, before we went to bed, something for which we could be sincerely thankful.

With your children you can play it as a game, directly they know what it means to be pleased, and can express their pleasure in a "Thank you,"—I should like any mother to try it with a tiny child. It does not matter in what country you live or in what direction you go. The only rule is that you and your child take it in turns to find three things which please you very much.

"The steam roller going up and down near the gate;
The train going under the bridge and puffing smoke up
in your face;
A tame little robin singing in the hedge."

"A bright red leaf amongst the green ones;
Ivy for birds' nests growing up the trees;
Forgotten lanes."

These are some of the things for which my six year old Betty used to feel her great heart bursting with joy. And if you play it with your child, please get excited now and then, and exclaim, "Oh! You've chosen that! I was just going to say 'patterns that the beautiful white frost makes!' Now I shall have to think of another one." To make it really interesting the mother must really play the game. You know what I mean. Believe in the effect which these habits will have upon the future character of your child—and upon its health. "Cheerfulness," wrote Rosmini, "imparts to our body a movement and vitality that is indescribable, and this helps the circulation of the blood, loosening it, so to say, from that stagnation from which so many ailments seem to proceed."

There was once a little girl called Caroline, who heard a wounded soldier talk about a country far away, desirable for its promise of wealth, its climate, scenery and abundance of food,—a country awaiting a population. She was nearly seven years of age, that entrancing period of child life when reason and imagination both hold their sway, and she began at once to play at colonization, on the bosom of a sea contained in a wash-hand basin; making her boats of broad beans, and expending all her pocket-money in little wooden dolls, which she removed in families and located in the bed quilt. The boats, filled with wheat, of which she kept a store in her thimble-case, were sent back to their friends. At the time it was only a game; but when she grew up, the whole world learned what Caroline Chisholm had been able to do for the Colony of New South Wales.

Other times, other games. Possibly the colonization game is no longer needed; but Hope and Thankfulness

may still be played at with advantage in any nursery. There are many little songs and poems which help considerably towards the desired attitude of mind. I expect you know James Whitcomb Riley's "Rain," which is so easily committed to memory and very much to the point:

> "It ain't no use to grumble and complain;
> It's just as cheap and easy to rejoice;
> When God sorts out the weather and sends rain,
> W'y rain's my choice."

And some of Christina Rosetti's baby songs are in the same strain. "Hope is like a hair-bell, trembling from its birth." Set to music by Sir Frederick Bridge.

> "If Hope grew on a bush, and Joy grew on a tree—
> What a nose-gay for the plucking there would be!"

set by Thomas Dunhill.

Then there is:

> "Keep on looking for the bright, bright skies,
> Keep on hoping that the sun will rise,
> Keep on singing when the whole world sighs,
> And you'll get there in the morning,"—

words by "The Trent Otter," and music by Sir Hubert Parry. That is another cheerful little song well calculated to give pleasure to any visitors to the nursery. Whilst what can better please the children themselves than Egbert Sandfort's "Strolling Player," with plenty of noise for an accompaniment!

> "Into the Kingdom of sorrow I come
> With Hope for my trumpet, and Song for drum.
> And, step upon step, till the journey is done,
> I will blow my trumpet, and beat my drum."

Saint Teresa was not the only woman who suffered from continual headaches and noises in her head, which almost prevented her from doing her writing. Yet all the while, she tells us, her soul was in perfect peace. The pains were in the top part of her head, which she understood was the seat of her soul; and she could not explain how peace and pain could be lodged together in the same spot—she only knew that it was so.

You will be like her, dear, good unselfish mother, amidst the confusing mixture of sounds in your own nursery; for you will remind yourself that besides the pleasure afforded to your children, there is being impressed upon their minds the delight of having Hope as a travelling companion; you will remember that the exterior and the visible have no place except to lead to the invisible and the interior; and although there may be many noises in the top part of your head, all the while your soul will be in perfect peace, like Padric Gregory's delightful "Mother of Six," which makes such a jolly little play for half a dozen rampagious children with an elder sister to act the part of the distracted parent.

(Do get his "Ulster Songs and Ballads" and read it as he really wrote it). In an English nursery it goes something like this :—

"Willie, Willie, quit your crying;
Jackie, give the baby that;
Tom, your boot 'll rip that sofa;
There! you've spoiled your father's hat.

THE TOP OF YOUR HEAD

"Josephine, stop chasing Jamie;
Watch! you'll fall, you are so dense!
Sure, a great big girl like you
Should have a wee, wee bit of sense!

"Willie, son, come off that table;
Tom, stop hammering that tray;
Mind! you'll step on Kathleen's fingers,
Oh, you have my head astray!

"Jackie, stop your shooting peas, sir;
You'll hit someone in the eye;
There! I knew you would, you villain,
Now you've made your sister cry.

"Jamie, close that coal-hole, will you;
My-oh-My, what dirty paws!
Go and wash your hands this minute,
Or I'll rise and get the Taws.

"Thank the Lord—it's bed-time! Strip you.
Silence; kneel and say your prayers.
Bless yourselves now. That's good children.
Now go easy up the stairs.

"I'm kept scolding, coaxing, kissing,
Till I'm hardly fit to stand;
Still at night-time with a candle,
Him and me goes, hand in hand,

"And we stand and watch them sleeping,
And for all their stirring noise,
With tears upon our cheeks we pray:
'God keep our girls and boys.' "

Thy cries, O babie, set mine head on aking.
. . . Hope cradle bringeth.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

A VESSEL OF GOLD

Dante saw the great white Rose
Half unclose;
Dante saw the golden bees
Gathering from its heart of gold
Sweets untold,
Love's most honeyed harmonies.

ALFRED NOYES

A VESSEL OF GOLD

AND lastly let us have the glory of Love. I have kept my favourite subject for my last appeal, and now I implore you, brave unselfish woman, to give your child *a heart of gold*. And please do not think that this is easier said than done. Really it seems to me that union with God, the last stage of the mystical life, is not so very difficult of attainment, if you just keep doing loving things incessantly all day long. They may be little things, they generally are, just tiny, nameless acts of personal service; but it is by them that your soul mounts up straight to the Heart of God. At first you can manage this kind of life by humbly playing that you are the servant of all, without letting any one suspect your intention. Later on you will keep whispering to yourself, in an ecstasy of joy: "Love and I do this. Divine Love and I are walking hand in hand;" and everywhere you go you will leave people happier and their hearts will be lighter, and they will find themselves more ready to respond to those graces which are always being offered to them. (There are no words really in which one can describe something beyond all human utterance; but I trust you rather to arrive at my meaning than cavil at the words I use).

"God known of the heart," Pascal calls this state of

joy. When you have ceased to have any wishes of your own there is an extraordinary happiness in doing the will of God, and inspiration for little deeds of loving kindness never fails. So I ask you, in your home life, to take Love for your ideal, knowing that by mastering God's laws you will get above and beyond all the limitations of this conventional, material world.

There is no other way in which to counteract such inequalities as arise from the natural superiority of one over another—there is no specific but *Love*. In every class of life children should be taught to keep their minds active in the exercise of universal good will, to cast little acts of love, like roses, before our Lord all day, making a path of flowers for wounded feet to tread.

It is quite possible to form the habit of doing everything with a definite, loving intention. Poverty of spirit, the desire to possess as few things as possible, will prevent there being, in your actions, any unnecessary hurry or confusion. And be sure your child will watch and imitate you. In a division of goods the better half will be given, as a matter of course, to the other child. Old postage stamps will be collected, cut out, tied up and sent to foreign missions—each as a definite act of missionary zeal. People often ask me if old stamps are of any value; used in this manner, I believe, for your child's character, they are of great, great value; and by the missionary spirit I mean the longing to share all that you have with others, the never-failing sense of the Brotherhood of Man.

That which you cannot attain by deeds you, at least, attain to in desire. Give, where you can give; and where you cannot possibly give, then pray, so that everyone will be the happier for having known you. Where you have

heard there is an illness or a sorrow, pause with your child for a passing prayer as you walk beneath the sufferer's bedroom window. Make such concerns your very special care. Love penetrates everywhere. Nothing is permanent or imperishable in the phenomenal aspect of Nature. All that you hear and see is a series of changing, shifting forms and events; not abiding or constant or fixed; and your love will work in the rearrangement of the atoms, helping to set up, next time, a more perfect form. Love is the elixir of life, the Philosopher's stone.

If you did nothing but believe in the possibility of a perfect world, you would do good by living; but it would be impossible for you, believing it, to do nothing more. If you once really, really believe in the Kingdom of Christ, your whole life will be white-hot with an ardour which goes far to hasten the coming of that Kingdom. There is, I consider, hardly a better thing that you can do for people —a more loving thing—than to believe in them; just to give them credit for the best motives in all they do. So, please, not only set your heart on serving, helping, healing; but above all on *admiring* all those with whom you come in contact—that is the way to make it golden! For to live by admiration is to live in the Kingdom of Heaven. To the humble this is such a joyous world! Only when you look up—and that is the constant attitude of humility, saying: "I am the least, all except myself *is* glorious"—you practically *are* in Heaven, conscious of nothing but the Love of God, exclaiming with St. Francis, "My God and my All!"

To form this habit of admiration in your children and to impress upon their minds the atomic theory—the changing beauty of the various parts and the wonders of the

perfect whole—pause to point out on a summer's evening the rhythmic dancing of the gnats, or watch the pigeons wheeling round overhead in the sunlight and thank God for the flash of silver on the wing of each as they turn. Say an appreciative "Goodbye" to the wise, migratory birds, as they collect together on the telegraph wires in the autumn. Admire *something* in everyone, in everything. See the good first and then be satisfied to look no further. Talent and generosity are required to see talent and generosity in others: nothing except self-conceit and malice are necessary to see or to imagine faults.

So you will *choose* your thought world and deliberately dwell there, placing any apparently flagrant faults, which might otherwise have troubled you, beneath the white cloud of forgetting. By always looking for the beautiful things in life and keeping your mind filled with good, uplifting thoughts, you will build a palace for your soul to dwell in. Lovely thoughts are the only things worth storing in the mind, and your careful choice becomes a work of charity when your intention is to share them, in conversation, with each other.

I once heard a lecture on kind speaking given by one of the Fathers of Charity to a girl's school. "Promise me," he said, "before I go, never to speak unkindly of each other." "But if it is true, Father?" they exclaimed. "That is no excuse" "But if the person I spoke to knew it before?" "Still that is no excuse. Amongst you Catholic children nothing uncharitable *must ever be mentioned.* Remember that."

Personally, I have found it a good plan when some one else's fault seems very evident, to go and kneel at the foot of my crucifix and say: "Dear Jesus, if this in any way

For innocence is Eden still;
Round the pure heart, the loving will.

FREDERIC MYERS.

displeases You, I will console You," and to kiss His Hands and Feet and Heart. Then if I still cannot get it out of my mind that the little boy *did* steal the sweets, I go without sugar on my porridge for a week, to clear away the ugly thought of theft. Do try this method. It helps to impress you with the wonderful, deep truth that if anything outside yourself seems wrong, it must be in some way your own fault, and should be sorrowed for by you. Exchange interests with God. "Think of Me, and I will think of thee," said her Divine Master to Saint Catherine of Siena. When, upon examination, you discover that something which has most dreadfully upset you, is not a thing calculated to distress our Lord, then you joyfully realize *neither need it distress you.*

But of course on this high flight of faith one must expect to have momentary trials. I remember once how Betty took a look round to find a suitable birthday present for our charwoman, and after careful inspection of all my special treasures decided that a beautiful coloured photograph of the Holy Family, in an oak frame, would meet the case. She had always loved it on my table, and she thought the little Joneses would love to see it on *their* mother's table. For more than twenty years I had kept it near me and had never dreamed of giving it away. But having taught my little daughter the principle upon which she acted, I could not reasonably object to its application, and there was nothing about such a gift which could in any way distress our Lord! A sense of humour carries one over these little difficulties: "I have lost my picture, but I need not lose my peace of mind!"

Saint Teresa taught that the best sign that any one has made progress is that she aims at the well-being and good

of others, with a powerful love of God, which rises above mortal things and is sovereign over all the elements of the world. How much happier a state of mind is this than that of the followers of the world's maxims, who are always dreading some evil which they fear will overmaster them, are ever haunted by a sense of failure and unfulfilled possibilities. All the elements obeyed Adam in his first innocence, and many of the saints returning to that former state recovered their power over created things. Perfect souls are rulers of the whole earth.

In giving your child a grasp of religion as an intimate human matter, you yourself will pass upwards into the life of the Beatitudes and will gain a new revelation of the possibilities of Love. When you set out to look for this teaching you will find it on all sides. "And do you love where there is no love and you shall have love," wrote Saint John of the Cross, from Madrid, in 1591.

"Start with the heart. When that is secure go on to the head," said the Ameer of Afghanistan in that impressive, extempore address which he delivered in sonorous, musical Persian, at the laying of the foundation stone of the Talmic College at Lahore; "I declare with all the emphasis at my command that science is the superstructure. Do not mistake it for the foundation. The foundation is, and must always be, religion. Ground your children, before everything else, in the eternal principles of their glorious faith."

"Love everything, animals, plants, every leaf, every grain of sand, all God's creation, and you will arrive at God's secret in things," teaches Dostoievsky.

"Never let a day pass without doing a kindness to somebody," is the advice of Sydney Smith.

"Keep up within yourself the treasure called kindness. Give without hesitation, lose without regret. Love all God's creatures," wrote George Sand to her son after she had learnt that when happiness slips away for oneself, that of others may be made one's own.

"Be always doing something serviceable to mankind, and let this constant generosity be your only pleasure," is the philosophy of Marcus Aurelius.

"To spend and be spent for the temporal and eternal weal of this suffering world," was the aim of General Booth.

It is here that we can meet everybody, and feel sweet unity with many spiritually minded people under different names—in kindness, in personal service, in gentleness, in courtesy,—in the Heart of Christ—in the Soul of the Church.

Saint Gertrude once had a vision of Our Lord's Heart in likeness of a vessel of gold, and the mother who drank from it appeared to be filled with gladness. That Heart, that treasure-house of all good, should be early made known to His children, that they may fill from it, as from a golden vessel of divine nectar, their cup of heavenly happiness. Then there will be no fear lest they may lose their faith. It is not possible to be themselves compassionate to others and not to become aware of an Infinite compassion whence their own is borrowed.

So lead your children on, day by day, into a region where the spirit is all in all. They will rejoice in finding they can be of service to others. They will be fascinated by the character and ideals of the poor man of Assisi. And in choosing friends when they grow up no one will be so completely to their taste, so restful to their spirits, so

congenial to their hearts, as a true simple-minded follower of St. Francis.

"Saints and their wonderful works are the ever present aim of Catholic teaching," writes Canon Barry, "there is no age but yields a harvest, and the Pope who canonizes them calls himself '*Servant of the Servants of God.*' "

But to live a really spiritual life, a saintly life, a good strong will is required: a child must learn to do whatever has to be done with keenness and pleasure, irrespective of whether at the moment he feels that he likes it or not. If the one great path over which human life is to progress is the path of the thoughts, certainly the one great power which can send the thoughts in the chosen direction is the power of the will, moved by grace.

We have agreed that a child's mind is not a little cavern to be stuffed full of facts, rules and formulæ; neither is it intended to be a disorderly den. To make the young life simple and straight the thoughts must be orderly. The straighter your own line of conduct the more magnetic influence you will have over others. And the magnetization of iron helps us to understand how this must be: the difference between an ordinary bar of iron and one that is magnetized, lies in the arrangement of the atoms; in an ordinary bar of iron the atoms are all massed together, in a magnetized bar some of the atoms are arranged in definite lines or chains along the bar; and the more of these chains formed, the stronger is the magnet. So will it be with the character of your child, the whole self directed along one straight, high road of thought and action. By careful training you do not destroy the energy, you alter the direction.

The influence of those who hold fast to a great

inheritance of ideals travels further than the eye can see. "Love" may be taken to mean nothing in lawn-tennis; but in life it is just everything. And the longer I live the more I become convinced that the real thing is the thing you lovingly wish. So please, dear, brave, unselfish, hopeful mother, give your child a *good strong will* and *a heart of gold.*

THE RETURN OF THE WATCH

From opposite worlds
Of sex, of ancestry, pursuits, traditions,
Each other suddenly, amazed, confronting—

EDWARD CARPENTER.

But time which none can bind,
While flowing fast away, leaves love behind.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

Il y a deux forces dans le monde, qui constituent deux mondes differents. Il y a la force ou le monde du Mal, il y a la force ou le monde du Bien . . . . . Le monde du Mal est fort, mais Dieu le contient; le monde du Bien est faible, mais Dieu le soutient. Le monde du Mal semble obtenir toutes les victoires, le monde du Bien est toujours victorieux.

Le Parfum de Rome.

LOUIS VEUILLOT.

THE RETURN OF THE WATCH

THERE are two ways by which men strive to attain a given end: by force, just material force, and by gentleness, sweetness, kindness. The first means may enable you to pull that which you want towards you; the other attracts it, and it becomes yours of its own accord. In the case of the circus donkey the clown has frequently assured us that it is all done by kindness, but there are other things besides that donkey which offer resistance in a stubborn, mule-like way, and although force seems to move them for a time, and may possibly move them quicker (though I am not even going to admit that) the loving method of attaining victory makes surrender voluntary and eternal. Your enemy does not follow you because he is chained to your chariot wheel: he walks beside you as a friend and equal, frankly admitting that he now sees your point of view.

When I came here this afternoon I brought some chains in readiness, hoping that you might all follow me in a triumphant procession when I went away; and you brought your stones judging it might be best to leave me and my silly theories crushed beneath them. From the extremely sympathetic manner in which you have received my speech

I see that now we understand each other, and when we leave this room we shall go out as friends and equals side by side. Your kindness has conquered. The only chains worth forging are those in which each link is an act of love.

Whatever our differences may be we agree that the essence of Christianity is love : love which can give without counting the cost, toil without seeking for rest, and labour without expecting any reward. It is love like this which rules the universe, and you have resolved to give your children such opportunities as will enable them, when they grow up, to rule. Possibly you are even at this moment wondering to what school you shall send them to receive the necessary instruction.

It was once suggested by a minister to Sadhu Sundar Singh that it would add very much to his effectiveness if he would take a course in a theological college. "I have been," replied the Sadhu, "to the best theological college in the world."

"Is that so!" exclaimed the minister, surprised.

"The Mother's bosom," said the Sadhu, "is the best theological college in the world."

I ask you to share this Eastern teacher's lofty ideas of the possibility of a mother's influence.

Can it be done? Is it really possible for a mother to live on these mental and spiritual heights *It is*. Keep before you a reproduction of Albrecht Dürer's "Praying Hands"—his mother's hands, of whom he says that he can never sufficiently set forth her praise. (She had eighteen children).

Life, governed in this way may be tiring, but it is never trivial, and never—if we may believe those who have

In the lap of the deathless Spirit who rules our home
you have been nursed for ages.
When in girlhood my heart was opening its petals,
you hovered as a fragrance about it.

SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

tried both—never so wearisome as the empty round of a worldly day. Trying to be a fashionable beauty is ever so much more exhausting than trying to be a saint.

And please remember that by a saint I mean a person with wide interests, a generous heart, a romantic spirit, and a merry wit. You have already promised me not to argue that judging by some of the dry old lives of saints which you have read, you would not have connected the title with such an aspect of the human character. Neither should I. As a matter of fact I entirely agree with you. Yet in spite of those very badly written biographies when I use the word I invariably think of a spiritual genius, whose aim and manner of life approaches the ideal which everyone should be able to recognise and admire.

Of course I cannot help seeing that it puzzles and bothers people who knew that eighteen years ago I adopted a baby, and determined to devote my life to bringing her up to be a saint, when they see her running about so young and fresh and happy; climbing the trees, swimming in the river, picnicing in the blue bell woods; enthusiastic over hockey matches, sledging, and skating; and rolling huge snowballs about to amuse our Michael. They did not expect her to write books, draw pictures, sing songs, and be so keen over recitations and acting and the production of Shakespeare's plays. That is not their idea of the sort of caterpillar that will turn into a butterfly; or the sort of ugly duckling that becomes a swan. There seems to be rather a prevalent notion that the child who is afterwards to become a saint must be plain and dull and uninteresting, if not actually flabby and cadaverous—the very antithesis of my resilient Betty. Personally I think she is shaping very well: to care for all this and still, with her hair down

for another couple of years, to look and feel about fourteen.

As my worst critic, a reviewer of her eight-year-old book, was forced to confess, bringing a child up from the time she was five weeks old to care for nothing but God and her neighbours does not seem to have done her any harm.

But that is all by the way. What I really meant to say was : Let me put together and pack up the things which you have decided to take home to your children.

First comes the Flag of Freedom, our standard. You are going to think more in future about this standard, and of those who upheld it for some reason which seemed to make it worth while to them—those who never lost sight of the great fundamental fact that to make the world happier and better we must teach its units to live more rightly all along the line: physically, mentally, morally, and spiritually.

When I want to get a really clear view, a right perspective of the doings of the present day, I find it quickest to step back into the middle ages and adjust my outlook from there. "Al shal be wel, and al shal be wel, and al manner of thyng shal be wele," wrote Juliana of Norwich, in mystic earnest, from the depths of her spiritual insight in the fourteenth century. "It is going, going, gone," we are being taught to say (half as a joke) under all painful circumstances, in this year of grace 1922. Such freedom from care—symbolized by the colours of our flag—may seem at first to be a little out of harmony with the experiences of the man in the street, a man too conscious of the external world, and insufficiently aware of spiritual things, a man for whom I feel sincerely sorry. It is not his fault if to him the visions of the spirit are unknown

joys. He is uninstructed in the richest, the most romantic, the most entrancing and emancipating life possible for man. It is our privilege to help him to break down the prison walls of common-place content, and to see the charm, the freshness, the freedom essential to religion at its best. Let us ask him, if he is a successful business man, to consider the risks he was willing to take in order "to win through." If he is an artist, and a happy pagan, let him remember hours of self-sacrifice, of hard work, of desolation, endured because of a vision and its promise.

In the spiritual life he is not asked to suffer more, to take more on trust, to work under greater and more puzzling difficulties, and I can promise (and here I speak from experience) I can promise him, on God's part, a lasting reward: a humble, happy satisfaction with a reasonable logical result—and a daily, widening light upon the things that matter.

Amongst the things that matter we may place your second present to your child: Delicious Crusts of Bread (mortification being understood to mean giving up ordinary comforts and satisfactions in order to obtain something finer and better—with humour and imagination). I wrap these crusts in a page of "Little Dorrit," one of the first pages about that villainous prison in Marseilles:—

"Monsieur Rigaud after despatching his sausage of Lyons, veal in savoury jelly, white bread, strachino cheese, and good wine, asked his fellow-prisoner who had only a lump of coarse bread, how he liked his dinner. 'How do you find that bread?'

'A little dry, but I have my old sauce here,' returned John Baptist, holding up his knife.

'How sauce?' asked Monsieur Rigaud.

'I can cut my bread so—like a melon, or so—like an omelet, or so—like a fried fish, or so—like Lyons sausage,' said John Baptist, demonstrating the various cuts on the bread he held, and soberly chewing what he had in his mouth."

Truly the imagination of John Baptist had been enriched by poverty!

Children delight in seeing how little they can manage with, after the fashion of a Boy Scout with his tie and his pole. If one tie and one pole will not make a tent or a bed or a bath or a frying pan or a windmill or a bridge across the stream, then half a dozen poles and half a dozen ties will do it—at any rate that is the impression I brought away from a delightful exhibition I once saw of all that the Boy Scouts could do.

The Key of the Nursery Door I shall send you by the hand of Kate Bar-lass: nice thoughts in a brave body, with the reminder "Avoid the hurries"—such a delightful Quaker expression for the antithesis of "a comfortable mind."

Buttons and Blacklead Brushes come at the top of a basket of *ripe* apples, with the note: Obey in your own interests, you little atoms of the Great Whole, or else your own little atoms will cease to obey you.

Rose-coloured spectacles and wings of faith are packed in Roger Ascham's silver dishes, carried by St. Lucy.

The Top of your Head is wrapped in the last verse of The Mother of Six.

And lastly A Good Strong Will comes in A Vessel of Gold.

THE RETURN OF THE WATCH

Time's up. Let me return your watch. Or was it your reason that you so kindly lent me at the beginning of the afternoon? You have forgotten? Well then, I am glad, because that shows you have been carried away by my enthusiasm. However, even when the matter has escaped the notice of his audience, it seems to be contrary to professional etiquette for the conjuror to retain the watch. So now let me hasten to remove those barriers which have been standing for the last few hours between you and the slavery of material things—barriers raised by my own insuperable faith. You need no longer feel as if you had a rabbit in your hat, a burnt hole in your handkerchief, and several new laid eggs in your hair.

What I have been trying to say, (in a somewhat roundabout manner for fear of giving offence to anybody) concerning

Not wanting many things
Cultivating pleasant thoughts
Working willingly for others and doing as *they* wish
Being on the look out for something to admire
Meeting the future with steadfast hope—and
Trying to be as kind as possible

may now be summed up in orthodox phraseology as Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience; Faith, Hope, and Charity.

It is these that I ask you to set before your children—the greatest of all, the gift comprising all, being just Love, LOVE, LOVE.

The fountains of word and action have their untrodden springs in the caverns of the world of thought. He who can command the fountains is master of the city.

FR. FABER.

Have no desires. Desire is the root whence every misfortune, every fault, has grown. Thine own self is a part. An atom. From the Great Self thou didst come. The way back, thy way. The barriers on the way, assertions of thy atom self. The assertions, each a Desire. All Desire vanquished, the way open: by escape—escape from the little self, which is fragment, separation—the atom regains existence in the Great Self.

JOHN AYSCOUGH.

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